

John M. Almy

The first number of the *Ninth* Volume, will not appear till near the end of June, as it is deemed better to delay it a few days, than to send it out without the Minutes of Synod.

THE
RELIGIOUS MONITOR,
AND
Evangelical Repository.

DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION, AS SET FORTH IN THE FORMULARIES OF THE WESTMINSTER DIVINES, AND OF THE CHURCHES IN HOLLAND.

VOL. VIII.

MAY, 1832.

NO. 12.

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Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls.
JER VI. 16.

EDITED BY A MINISTER OF THE ASSOCIATE CHURCH.

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THE
RELIGIOUS MONITOR,
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VOL. VIII.

MAY, 1832.

NO. 12.

[For the Religious Monitor.]

ON DIVINE LOVE.

(Continued from page 651.)

4. The Father delighteth in the Son, as in him were laid all his purposes of love, which he was to *reveal*, and *accomplish* for the salvation of his chosen people. The designs of the Father's love to the elect are sometimes said to be laid in *himself*. We read of the mystery of *his i. e. the Father's* "will which he hath purposed in *himself*." Eph. i. 9. And yet the apostle shows that this is not to the *exclusion* of the Son, for when enlarging on the same subject, he speaks of the eternal purpose which he, i. e. the Father, "purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Chap. iii. 11. These purposes of God's love to his people were the endearments of eternity, upon which the Father and the Son took sweet counsel together. They were "hid in God." And could never have been known by men without a revelation. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." The Son was appointed the Messenger of the Covenant to reveal these purposes. This was not to the exclusion of another person, for saith the apostle, "God hath revealed them to us by his *Spirit*." But he is "the Spirit of Christ." The Son himself was appointed as the prophet to the church, as Moses declared. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like me: unto him ye shall hearken." Deut. xviii. 15. Though this promise may have respect to a succession of prophets, the apostle applies it principally to Christ. Acts, iii. 22. The Son embraced the first opportunity to *reveal* the purposes of God's love to men. When our first parents were sitting in the region and shadow of death, "he directed dependance to the

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first promise that ever was made, and the strangest that ever was heard, that the great God should be "the seed of the woman:" That he should have so much of the reality of *our nature* as to suffer "the bruising of his heel;" and yet in that weakness exert the glory of *his own*, so as to break the serpent's head. This was the womb of the morning: from that promise the day-spring knew its place. All the other predictions were but as so many streams of light, of which our gospel is the perfect day.*

He employed a succession of prophets for several ages, but it was "the spirit of Christ in them, that testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Angels were called in to the service. Gabriel was sent down to tell Daniel a great deal more than the deliverance from Babylon. And what was that? First, the *time* when Messiah the Prince would come; and Secondly, that this Prince would be a sacrifice: for saith he, "the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself." "He was to be a native, an inhabitant, a sacrifice, and a conqueror in our world." Nay, Gabriel was the first preacher that we read of in the New Testament, to Zacharias, the virgin Mary, and the shepherds. In his discourses to each of these, he lays out the nature, the office, and the design of our Redeemer, that "he shall be called the son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his Father David: and he shall rule over the house of Jacob, and that of his kingdom there shall be no end." To the shepherds there was not only a proclamation of his birth, and his title, "A Saviour who is Christ the Lord," but the great result of all this dispensation, that it would be "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men."

In the fulness of time, the Son himself

* Eradbury.

appeared on earth, and "preached righteousness in the great congregation." He was filled with the Holy Ghost, and received the approbation of his Father. John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. "And lo, a voice came from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He himself saith, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel." He made full proof of his ministry. Thus he appealed to his Father at last, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." These words imply not an inferiority, but a communion in the Godhead, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them." In fine, "God who at sundry times," or in sundry parcels, here a little and there a little, and in divers manners, in a multitude of forms and representations, "spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son." He hath given us the whole extent of revelation at *once*, in its full quantity, and best manner. "He spake to the fathers by the prophets:" they were many, and every one of them had something peculiar to himself; they rose and died off in their order; the prophets did not live forever. But he never had any more than *one Son*; and therefore when he spake by *him*, as he had no greater to send, he had no more to say. "No man has seen God at any time, but *the only begotten Son*, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* has declared him:" and after what he said in person, and made known by his Spirit, the sayings are finished, the Book is sealed up, and all revelation is now at an end. In the times of the prophets, the light of truth was like that of the *morning*, it spread and grew, till at last it came to a perfect day. The sun of righteousness began to rise in the promise made to *Adam*, in every generation he was getting higher; he shone upon the earth sideways, but when he came into our world himself, he was then at full height, and struck down his beams in a direct line. The Jews were the *children of the prophets*, and of the covenant God made with *Abraham*, and it is all completed in this, that *unto them first* God sent his Son Jesus.*

Secondly, Though angels, prophets, and apostles, by a divine commission could *reveal* the counsels of God's love to men, the Son alone could *fulfil* them. Men lay their designs with all the wisdom they have,

but the uncertainty of the event abates their satisfaction. But "the counsel of the Lord standeth sure, and the purposes of his heart to all generations." "He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." Indeed, the difficulties which lay in the way of our salvation appeared to be insuperable. The Divine nature was dishonored, and must be glorified, the law was broken and must be obeyed, justice was provoked and must be appeased. Sin, Satan, death and the grave triumphed, and must be vanquished: and justice required that this must be done by one in human nature. But these were only foils to set off the glory of divine wisdom. The Father was not surprised by the fall of man, having made full provision in the person of his Son, to retrieve all the damages sustained by it. "I have laid help upon One that is mighty." (One who excels, who overcomes all difficulties, and opposition.) As "Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh," he was capable to accomplish the whole design. He could glorify the divine nature, and save the human. He was able to magnify the law, satisfy justice, vanquish sin, Satan, death, and the grave, ascend with all the marks of a conquest, and "enter into the holy place by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us." The Father placed *entire* confidence in him. "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high," but antecedent to this, he must go through a course of humiliation and sufferings, "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." But, from that state of abasement and misery, he would rise to supreme dignity, and universal empire, "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him, (not in *contempt* but *submission*,) for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." He fully answered the opinion that the Father had of him. Saith he "I can of mine ownself do nothing; as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will," i. e. my separate, or opposite will, "but the will of him that sent me." We are in a perpetual harmony. Again, "My meet is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." With these mutual inclinations they work out the scheme of man's redemption; "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire." It begins with a complaint upon the head of justice; this followed with the reso-

* Bradburys

lution of the Son to do every thing necessary to fill up the Father's honor, "mine ears thou hast opened." Or as the apostle explains it, "a body hast thou prepared me." "Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is within my heart." A volume and book are the same. But agreeable to the original, it is, "in the chief part of thy book," as if it were the first line, the main head or chapter, the principal column, that he came "to do the will of God," and as a preparation for this, "thy law is within my heart"—As if he had said, "Thou hast declared *thy* will, there is a ready consent in mine. my heart is the seat of duty, and thy law is the rule of it which is written there." As one expresses himself, when the apostle quotes the passage, he makes this great remark, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." i. e. he set aside the typical sacrifices, that he might "offer himself a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God." If he came by the Father's appointment, he must act by the Father's command. If he "was delivered by the determinate counsel of God," it must be to fulfil that counsel. Accordingly when his sufferings approached, with all their severity, he checks his own petition. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I to this hour." As if he had said, "Nothing is more terrible to my suffering nature, that would run back from these severities, but as I came upon another's errand, I must not be mine own choser, this torment is all an agreed thing, an article in the eternal covenant, and therefore it must be endured."—He obeyed the summons of death. "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do, arise, let us go hence." To the Father he made his appeal. "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—As if he had said, "I have finished the course of my obedience to the precept of the law, my ministry, and my miracles." "And now I am no more in the world, and I come to thee." In fine, when on the cross, he made the great atonement, he said, "it is finished." And in full confidence of acceptance, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." And when the mystery of God is finished, he will say "it is done." Then, he "shall deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father," that God, without the pre-

sent dispensation by ordinances, 'may be all.'

5. The Father delighteth in the Son, as all the divine perfections are represented *in*, and glorified *by* him. Let us contemplate these distinctly.

First, As the Son is the only begotten of the Father, so he hath the same divine perfections, equally with him; and, as has been observed, he is the immediate and complete object of his love. The Father contemplates the same divine perfections in him that he doth in himself. For he is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

"Whether you apply the name glory to the divine *nature* itself, or to the person of the Father, it comes to the same thing. But the word *his* is a supplement, it may be read "he is the brightness of glory." "There is nothing greater in any glory than its brightness." The one is equal to the other, and therefore when this is affirmed of the Son, it is to answer the end of the similitude, that he is the same to *Deity*, that brightness is to glory; we may distinguish them, but we cannot divide them. There is another word by which the apostle expresses the divine *nature*, *ὁμοιότης*, which is translated *person*; but it rather signifies *substance*, reality, being, or existence; and of this the Son is said to be the express image *ἡ ἀνακρίσις*, i. e. character, which signifies the impression that is made on wax, and answers in every point to the original from which it is taken. We take our view of the size, and shape, and the variety, as well in the wax as we do in the seal. And therefore if the Son be the express image of the Father, it is not because he is another *person*, but because he has the same nature. What is affirmed of the Father as a person, distinguishes him from the Son; he hath no express image of that, and therefore when he is said to be the character, the impression it must be in something that is equal in *both*. This is evident, if we do but consider the *personal actions* that are ascribed to the Father, he is said to *beget*, and the Son to be the only begotten. Now one of these personalities is not the express image of the other, though the nature be the same in them both. So we read that the Father *sanctified* and *sent* the Son into the world; but being *sent* can by no means be called the image of sending. So that the Son is the character and impression of what he has *with the Father*, and this can be no other than *eternal power and Godhead*. Thus we read, that as the Father hath life in himself, (which is not the peculiarity of a *person*, but the glory of a *na-*

ture,) so of the Son it is said "In him was life." Again, as the Father *quickens* the dead and *raises* them; so the Son *quickens* whom he will. And again, as the Father had a *glory before the world was*; so had the Son with him. Lastly, as the Father sits upon the throne, so does the Lamb forever and ever. So what we read of *Christ* is, that he has *glory*; he is the brightness of it: that he is possessed of *this very being*; it is the same in him that it is in the Father. There is a distinction of persons, but no difference of nature. As there never was a glory without a brightness: So of this substance there has always been a *χαράκτις*, an express image. One that has it in perfect union to the Father, and full equality with him."*

Secondly, All the divine perfections are represented in the Son, as he is "Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh." Thus he said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." i. e. He hath seen the same divine perfections in me that are in the Father, for, "I and my Father are one." Again, "believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." Thus, he is the object of the Father's love, as he is incarnate: There was a testimony given to him at his baptism and transfiguration. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Let us now proceed to contemplate

Secondly, The Father's delight in the Son, as all the divine perfections are glorified by him. Thus he saith "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." This brings us full upon the *Socinian and Unitarian folly*. Do but observe how the divine perfections will appear in the salvation of sinners if you divest them of all regard to the satisfaction of Christ.—God's *love* and *pity* to us would show a *softness* in his *nature* too much like *our own*, as he himself saith, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." i. e. would easily pass by thine iniquity, "but I will reprove thee," "The soul that sinneth shall die." And then his *power*, exercised in delivering the captive would be an act of *violence*. It would be dishonorable to *justice* and *holiness*, "without shedding of blood is no remission." And as sin had got the better of the *law*, it would continue sullied, and sunk with the contempt of men. Lastly, it would argue a deficiency in God's *wisdom* to save his creatures at the expense of the *glory* of his perfections, and the *honor* of his *institutions*. But now we see all these perfections glorified in the face of Jesus," i. e. in the person and work of Christ. Here God's *love* shines con-

spicuous, as the way it is displayed to *us* is most expensive to *him*. "Herein hath he commended his *love* towards us, in that when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Here is a greater display of his *power*, for "through death, he subdued him that had the power of death, that is the devil." And this leads on to another instance, which was raising him from the dead: for on that occasion, we read of "the exceeding working of his mighty power." Here we see what a love he had to his *justice* and *holiness*, and what a hatred he had to *sin*, when he was at so much expence to have it put away, or though he displayed his grace, he had regard to his righteousness, as the apostle declares, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth," (appointed from the beginning) "a propitiation" (a propitiatory, or mercy seat) "through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God," (there is mercy in this, but the apostle adds) "To declare, I say, at this time, (in the very moment of pardon) his righteousness, that he may be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." There was no need of *wisdom* to contrive what was to be done by mere *pity* or *force*. But this making the honor of every attribute complete in itself, and the whole harmonious together, may well make us cry out, "To the only wise God our Saviour, glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.

Let us consider this branch of the subject, by contemplating the zeal, delight, and expence, with which the Son glorified the Father. As he was sent from above, so he had regard to the authority that he moved by. And therefore when his sufferings came within view, with all their severity, he resigns to the will of his Father. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name," (though at the expence of my blood and agony) "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, (viz: In the constitution of thy person, as Emmanuel, by thy obedience, ministry, and miracles,) "and will glorify it again." (i. e. by inflicting the punishment, receiving the atonement for sin, and giving the reward.) Nay, as the Son sunk, in his troubles, both his own, and his Father's glory began to arise. When Judas was gone out, driven by the devil to the priest, he spake of it as a new part of time, as if from that moment

* Bradbury.

the scenes were changed. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. The former of these expressions shows what he *had*, the latter what he *did*: by this he seems to signify some dignity in the article of dying; particularly, that he would bring off the divine perfections with honor, because he distinguisheth between *these* shares of honor, and *those* that would follow in another world: "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." Nay, in prospect of his last and severest sufferings, "he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." What mutual glorifications are here! "There was never any moment of his life in which the Father had not glorified the Son. He had all along "the glory of the only begotten of the Father." And so constantly did the Son glorify the Father, that in him saith he, "I am always well pleased." But now the "hour was come," for these mutual glorifications, these exchanges of love and duty, to be more abundant." Thus he said to his Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—Nay, in the hour of his death, as he went further in obedience to his Father, he received a greater testimony upon his soul from him. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again." In the faith of this, he drew his last breath with these words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

(To be Continued.)

[For the Religious Monitor.]

A MAXIM OF BIBLE RELIGION.

[Concluded from page 669.]

I proposed in this paper, to conclude the Maxim, with the illustration of a single inference from it, viz. that there has been no new religion since the giving of the first promise. The first promise runs in these terms:—"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. iii. 15. By the seed of the woman, I understand Christ personally; the eternal son of God incarnate; likewise, Christ mystically, or Christ together with his body the church. By the serpent and his seed I understand all the fallen angels and all of mankind not chosen to

salvation. I take the bruising of the heel to comprehend all the opposition which the serpent and his seed, and the principles of un-renewed nature have made or will make in any manner to Christ and his church—and the bruising of the serpent's head to comprehend Christ's enduring the curse, obeying the precept, and thereby rendering in the room of elect sinners, complete satisfaction to justice, for the violation of God's covenant, which was at the same time spoiling principalities—the crucifying of the flesh in the hearts of the regenerate by divine strength, received from Christ, and all the strokes of judgment, inflicted in the course of divine providence, on individuals and nations, together with the last judgment, in which Christ and his seed will have all their enemies under their feet. This I take to be the sum of the doctrine contained in the first promise. That faith which believed this, upon the testimony of God, and accepted of it as the only but sufficient ground of hope for salvation freely given of God, was the characterising principle of the religion at that time set up. And the acts of this faith performed in observing all the rites of sacrificing then appointed, and all instituted worship, together with the corresponding influence on the affections of the heart and manner of outward life, comprehended the whole of religion. Enoch preached no other doctrine. He prophesied saying "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude ver. xiv. 15. This "Lord" is but the same seed of the woman. Only the prophet looked forward and saw him "in the glory of his power," "revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not his gospel." And he had such a view of the awful majesty and glory of this mighty God in human nature, and of the overwhelming greatness of his judgment that all time seemed to be removed and his advent just at hand. "*Behold the Lord cometh,*" &c. Is not this the same realizing sense of the last judgment and of the eternal world which *we* at this day are called on to carry in our minds daily according to the exhortation of Peter, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." II. Pet. iii. 12.

And may we not infer from this prophesy of Enoch, that the ancients were not so far behind us in the knowledge of Christ as we sometimes flatter ourselves? And what is this "executing of judgment upon the ungodly," but the finishing act of that bruising of the serpent's head promised? It is plain that nothing will remain to be done after this, for it brings into account *all* the ungodly, *all* their ungodly deeds, and *all* their hard speeches. In this the serpent and his seed will be completely and forever destroyed. The Father will then make them the footstool of Christ, the seed of the woman. And if Enoch saw this coming of Christ so clearly as contained in the first promise, it cannot be doubted that he also discovered in it, by the same assistance, the glorious resurrection of the body; and his faith in this was surely confirmed by his translation. Noah preached nothing different or new. We are told that he was "a preacher of righteousness" II. Pet. ii. 5. and again what kind of righteousness it was, viz. "the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. xi. 7. That was the righteousness which was typically wrought by the sacrifice upon the altar, and signified by the coats of skin to be a covering to the guilty. And these two things served to explain and confirm the ground of hope contained in the first promise. This promise was the main ground which God had given in Noah's time for faith, and therefore it must be that the righteousness which faith embraced was exhibited in this promise. "By faith," it is said, "being warned of God of things not seen as yet, prepared an ark to the saving of his house by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." They "were saved by water, the like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us" I. Pet. iii. 21. Now if the ark and the flood on which it floated was a figure like baptism, or one of like import, it was a figure of Christ, the seed of the woman. And Noah's entering into the ark was a figure of being ingrafted into Christ and so saved by him, and the flood drowning the whole world of the ungodly was a figure of Christ's bruising the serpent's head completely at the last day, according to Enoch's prophecy, and it was also a step towards it. Hence the two events are compared together by Christ, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the son of man be, for as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not till the flood came and took them all away, so also shall the coming of

the son of man be." Mat. xxiv. 37. But although there was nothing new or different from the first promise, yet its meaning and import was brought more particularly to view. It was now manifest that this bruising of the serpent's head and the salvation of the church should be accomplished by the same event. As it was in this event of the flood, so was it in the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians—in the destruction of Haman in the days of Ahasuerus—in the overthrow of idolatry in the days of Constantine, and so it will be in the destruction of Antichrist, and likewise at the end of the world when *all* the wicked will be destroyed together and forever. In all these destructions or bruising of the serpent, the church is delivered and advanced forward until every one of the chosen seed is saved with an everlasting salvation.

Abraham had no other doctrine or religion delivered to him. It was all concerning the seed of the woman, and the exercise and trials of his faith were all of them upon that. The seed of the woman must come from some particular stock or family and be born at some particular place of the world, and at some special time. God let Abraham know that *his* was to be the family, and the land of Canaan the place; and that he would raise up *his* posterity by Isaac to be a people that they might continue and be distinct from all other people until the "promised seed should come." And on this account although they should wander for a time and be evil entreated 400 years, yet they should be delivered and come forth and be settled in the land of Canaan. Upon his obedient surrender of Isaac, God swore that "in blessing he would bless him, and in multiplying he would multiply his seed as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea shore, and that his seed should possess the gate of his enemies, and in this seed should all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 16, 17. There was nothing new in all this. It was only a lecture on the first promise with a particular application of the promised seed to him, and a grant that he should be a progenitor, and a confirmation of that promise by oath. This "possessing the gate of his enemies" is but another way of expressing the "*bruising of the serpent and his seed*;" and as we have already seen that this implies the deliverance of the church, so here we are informed of the *extent* of this blessing which was designed in the first promise, viz. "*all the families of the earth*." Circumcision was a visible sign and seal of this gracious engagement into which God had entered with

Abraham and his posterity that from him the promised seed should descend, and that the external privileges of a visible church state should be theirs only until that time. Moses did not set up any new religion. He assumed the affairs of man to be in the same position in which they were at the giving of the first promise. First the law was given from Sinai in circumstances of terrible majesty, which made Israel to feel again the force of that voice which said to Adam "Where art thou?—hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? Gen. iii. 9. Israel was afraid and removed and stood afar off, and they said speak thou to us, but let not God speak to us lest we die. Second—the ceremonial law was given, which was nothing else than a figure of what the seed of the woman should be, what offices he should execute, what work he should finish, and what a blessing he should bestow upon his mystical body. Moses as God's servant showed them by a type that this seed should be a *priest*—and such a priest as should have all the sins of Israel laid upon him or set to his account—that he should be a *curse* for them—should offer himself a sacrifice to the law and justice of God in their stead—and that then he should go into the immediate presence of God and present his own blood as a ground of his interceding for the blessing promised, and also that he should give forth that blessing unto all the families of the earth. Also in the laver that was set before the tabernacle he gave a type of the efficacy of his blood to cleanse the heart from all sin and to make the worshippers holy and meet to stand before God. All this coincides with the meaning of the first promise and the sacrificing set up at first. When by the hand of this Moses, Pharaoh who was an eminent minister of the serpent, and his Egyptians were overthrown and destroyed, both in Egypt and at the Red Sea, and Israel was delivered, it was just another step towards the complete and final bruising of the serpent and the salvation of the church. And that this was done by the seed of the woman was evident to them from the Passover, which was a type of him and a memorial of that great deliverance which was to be kept up till he himself should come. The Prophets taught no new doctrine. They only drew aside the veil of mystery a little more, that as the time of his advent approached the church might have a nearer and clearer view of this promised seed. They spake more particularly of him than had been done before. A virgin, they

said, should conceive and bring him forth, and his name should be called Emmanuel. Isa. vii. 14. Again, "unto us a son is given, a child is born, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace chap ix. 6. What he was originally and essentially—what he should become voluntarily—the manner of his appearance—his reception among the posterity of Abraham, his countrymen—his doctrine—his meritorious obedience—his vicarious death and the glory that should follow it, beginning with his resurrection and concluding with his coming to the last judgment, was the theme of their prophetic preaching and the ground of all their exhortations and encouragements to the church in all her straits. "The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" was the object to which they directed the drooping soul. All they said went to make the people look and wait for, and trust and hope in him as a great Saviour who should save them from their enemies on every side and bring them to enjoy the fulness of the promised blessing. At the same time that the "year of his redeemed should come, the day of his vengeance upon their enemies should also come." "I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there were none with me, for I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment, for the day of vengeance is in my heart and the year of my redeemed is come." Isa. lxiii. 3, 4. They taught in plain terms what had been held up by sacrifice from the very giving of the first promise, that Christ was substituted in the room of the church and had all her debt to the law and justice of God set over to his account, and that the merit of his obedience and sufferings was set to her account as the sole ground of her justification and acceptance before God. They said "The Lord hath *laid on him* the iniquity of us all—he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." chap liii. 5, 6. In the Psalms there is nothing new or different. These same doctrines taught by the prophets are converted into songs of praise. This seed of the woman as the church's help and saviour and her avenger on all her enemies is their great theme. God was pleased still more minutely to reveal the precise line of Messiah's descent

in them than had been done before; and that he was to be of the tribe of Judah and house of David, and the manner of his last sufferings and death, by which he should destroy the works of the devil, viz: "They pierced my hands and feet." Ps. xxii. But this was not any thing new in religion, but only a further discovery of the old—therefore the three grand divisions of the Old Testament scriptures have for their great subject "The things concerning Christ," the promised seed. I come now to the New Testament. And first to *John the Baptist*. This same seed was the sum of his preaching. He came "to prepare the way before him," and turn the attention towards him. His great work was to point to him with the finger and say "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and to instruct his disciples that "this was he of whom Moses and the prophets did write;" that "his fan was in his hand and he would thoroughly purge his floor and gather the wheat into his garner, but he would burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." "I indeed," says he, "baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In all this he harmonized perfectly with the first promise and all that Moses and the prophets had said concerning it. Christ himself when he came advanced no new doctrine. He came to *BE* and to *DO* all that had been said of him from the beginning. He did *really* what the lamb slain in sacrifice from the foundation of the world signified of him. He came "not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them," "and till heaven and earth pass away—one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law till all be fulfilled." "He was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers." Rom. xv. 8. The sum and substance of all these promises was contained in the first one, as has already been shown; and the confirming of them was the fulfilling of them—that is to say the fulfilling of the first, and this comprehended the whole of his work. He was truly and properly the seed of the woman, viz: the virgin Mary—born in Bethlehem Ephrata—of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah and seed of Abraham, as had been promised. He fled to Egypt "that out of it God might call his son." Mat. ii. 15. He dwelt in Nazareth, because he was to be called a Nazarene. ver. 23; and he went on fulfilling what had been written of him by every step and circumstance of his life until all that was written or promised

was fulfilled; and then, and not before, he bowed his head and said it was finished.—

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1. John iii. 8; and he did so, "and having spoiled principalities and powers he made a show of them, openly triumphing over them in his cross." Col. ii. 15. When he was in the progress of this great work, the people were amazed and said "What *new* doctrine is this, for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits and they do obey him." Mark i. 27; but it was *no new doctrine*, but the very doctrine given in promise to our first parents to believe as a ground of hope. The power of the devil came into the world by the curse, and the first word of new covenant mercy promised that Christ should remove it and expel them and bring in everlasting righteousness and all the blessings of redeeming love, and this he was now doing. His great summary doctrine was, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." Mat. xx. 28. "Therefore doth the Father love me," said he, "because I lay down my life that I might take it again—I lay down my life for the sheep." John x. 15, 17. And in this he taught nothing but what had been taught from the beginning, and therefore he appealed to the scriptures: "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me—had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." chap. v. 34, 46 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." chap. viii. 56. When all things written were fulfilled, he performed the last and finishing act of his all-meritorious obedience by voluntarily laying down his life, and thereby he "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14. And when he arose from the dead on the third day "according to the scripture," 1. Corinth. xv. 4, "he ascended up on high and led captivity captive," and "he sat on the right hand of God from hence forth expecting until he make his enemies his footstool."

There was no change introduced into the church or worship of God except what became necessary upon his *coming*, being no more a future but a past event. Every thing typical and ceremonial pointed to him as yet to come, and therefore could no longer be consistent with fact. The temple, and

all the outward services belonging to it must now be set aside as having completed the end of their institution, and henceforth the observance of the first day of the week and the celebration of the Lord's supper and baptism, together with that simple outward order of worship which is equally adapted for "all the families of the earth," all of which has respect to the seed of the woman *as come*, must take their place. But by this, no new doctrine or principle of obedience or of worship was introduced. The church continued to be the "same body with the same spirit." The Apostles preached no new doctrine. They were only *witnesses* of all things which the seed of the woman began both to do and to teach. Christ solemnly invested them after his resurrection with the office of his official witnesses, and gave them power and authority to go forth into all the world asserting, defending, and establishing "all things whatsoever he had commanded them." "And he said unto them thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and ye are *witnesses* of these things, and behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye at Jerusalem until ye be endowed with power from on high." Luke xxiv. 46. Now that the first promise and all those that were afterwards given in explaining it to the church, were now completely explained and fulfilled, this was henceforth to be the great duty of the church to the end of the world to preserve and witness to and transmit what she had now obtained as absolutely sufficient for life and salvation, and the order and worship of the militant church. They went forth and preached the mystery of the gospel with great minuteness and clearness. They stated the grounds of a sinner's acceptance before God with infallible accuracy, and so clearly that unless men are wilfully blind they cannot misunderstand it. They said it was "not by works of righteousness which we have done," "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," "not of works lest any man should boast." They said that man unregenerated "cannot please God;" that he "is dead in trespasses and sins;" that until he "is *created* anew in Christ Jesus unto good works," he cannot perform any; but it is "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"—"it is God that justifies," and that "he imputeth righteousness without works," that he "jus-

tifies freely by his grace," that "it is according to his mercy that he saves us," "through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth—through washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

They said that "he who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Yet in all their varied discourses they only "preached Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but unto them that believe, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation." They taught "none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come," and consequently none other things than those which were contained in the first promise. Their whole ministry went to explain, apply and defend the doctrine of Christ, and to build upon it the church in that order which should stand till Christ come again, for they said "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ." The four first books of the New Testament are the history of Christ, the fifth is a history of his Apostles, and the rest, except the last, are all employed chiefly in defending the purity of the doctrine already mentioned, against those who wished to corrupt it and especially those who would have works in some shape into the grounds of a sinner's justification. The last book gives a prophetic view of the enmity that still subsisted between Christ and the serpent and their respective seeds, and concludes with an account of Christ's complete victory and the final overthrow of the serpent and his whole party. On the whole, it is manifest that Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman, is the great object revealed to faith from the beginning to the end of the Bible; and he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Therefore, in revealed religion he has been from the first setting up of it "the way, the truth, and the life;" the prophet, priest, and king of it. No man could ever come unto the father but through him. From the beginning there has been one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. That *faith*, the active and characteristic principle of true heart religion, has been precisely the same from the beginning in its origin, its nature, and its office in the matter of justification. Nothing more is required to demonstrate its operations and its end, than a due consideration of the Apostle's design in the whole 11th chapter of the Hebrews. In that chapter he speaks of faith from that of

Abel down to the end of the Old Testament dispensation, and if it was not the same throughout, and the same by which a man may now under the gospel be justified, and live and fight his way through all difficulties, trials and temptations, and at length conquer and lay hold of the crown of life, then it does not answer his purpose, and his argument must be inconclusive. But this was impossible, for he was directed by the infallible spirit of Christ into the very truth. Therefore it is the same. That same chapter may be employed to prove that only the revealed will of God and nothing else has been or ever can be the rule of faith and obedience. This must indeed follow from the sameness of faith, for the moment it can be shown that faith can go a single step by another rule, it can also be shown that it is not the same faith. In fine there has been from the beginning but "one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all, but unto every one of us is grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. iv. 4, 7. If any then will pretend to a discovery of new doctrine, new faith, or new practice, in religion, know assuredly it is not true religion, but "diverse and strange doctrines which carry about men like a tempest, and at last swallow them up in destruction." Now I beseech all who have read or may read these papers to mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to this doctrine, to wit: Christ crucified, the Lord our righteousness and strength—and avoid them.

Ego.

[For the Religious Monitor.]

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

Further extracts from "Reid's Seven last Plagues."

After having given a description of the judgments, by which the "little horn" is to be destroyed, the author proceeds to say—

"The result of these judgments will not only be the casting down of this 'little horn,' which has for so long a time 'made war with the saints,' but the entire destruction of the beast on whose head he stands. 'I beheld then,' says Daniel, 'because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.' It is an important trait in the character of the Almighty, that he debases the proud and exalts the humble: and it is an obvious trait in the character of the

prevailing religion of the present day, that it gives encouragement to the pride of the human heart. It is the very system of self-righteousness for which the church of Rome has set the example. Every plan and method which the invention of man can suggest, is carried into effect for the propagation of religion, while little attention is paid to the plan and method laid down and followed by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. He taught humility, by insisting on the sovereignty of God, by giving a prominent place, in his preaching, to the doctrines of election and grace, and by setting his face against all the traditions and inventions of man. The consequence was, that he had few converts to his doctrines in that sinful generation; but in this generation which is no less sinful and degenerate, the convert makers are exceedingly successful. It has, in fact, become a mere mechanical business, a work of art: but while they trumpet forth their own praises, and exhibit the evidences of their victory over the kingdom of Satan, there is too much reason to fear, that like the converts of the Pharisees, they are made twofold more the children of hell. Instead of learning heavenly principles, and advancing in the knowledge of Christ, "they feed on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?" The numerous proclamations concerning religious revivals, the immense success of missionary labors, the great good which has been, and is doing by tract societies, &c. &c., are the words which the horn speaks in this part of the Christian world. It speaks always in such a manner as to gratify the natural pride of the heart, and by this it may always be known and distinguished from the still small voice of the gospel. But its great words are working its own ruin, and the ruin of all the present plans for the propagation of Christianity. These are not new inventions. The protestant world has followed the footsteps of the church of Rome: their plans and their works are of the same nature with her corruptions, and when Babylon shall fall, they must all fall together."

"It must be acknowledged that in all ages since the days of the apostles, the spirit of antichrist has had much influence among mankind. The doctrines, the institutions, and all the ordinances of religion, have been used in a manner contrary to their nature, and the intention for which they were given. The history of every age furnishes mournful testimonies on this subject; and hence it is difficult for us to believe that our age is

more corrupt than the ages that are past.—It is hard for individuals to discover their own faults: and there is a similar difficulty in discovering the faults of the time and the society in which we live. It is indeed a subject which few take the trouble to examine. Men are generally inclined to pursue the beaten track, without ever suspecting any deviation has been made from the path of truth. When they look around them, and find so much apparent harmony, and so much charity among the different religious sects, which were formerly hostile to each other; when they see them all uniting, and combining their exertions for the circulation of the Scriptures, and for many other laudable and benevolent objects; and hear them reporting how God has blessed their endeavors beyond their most sanguine expectations; to say that these are the voice of the great words which the horn spake, and for which the beast shall be slain, &c., seems to argue, not only a total want of charity, but a degree of prejudice and perverseness, which render a man totally unfit for society. Often has the writer of these remarks had his heart tortured by such reflections. It gives him pain at the present moment, to say that these splendid appearances have little reality in them,—that the charity of this age is founded on a want of regard for truth,—that the present exertions for the promotion of the gospel, when traced to their source, will generally be found to proceed from the selfish desire of promoting the influence of their particular sects,—and, in fact, that every work they engage in, however laudable and benevolent it may be in its nature, is soon contaminated and corrupted by passing through their hands.

It will no doubt be objected, that such observations are calculated to injure the cause of religion,—to weaken the efforts of charitable and zealous, and unnerve the arm of benevolent exertion. What will become of our bible institutions, of our missionary and tract societies, and of all the plans which have been formed for the propagation of the gospel, if the world should suspect that their charity has been abused, and their gifts which they have so liberally bestowed for the support of the Redeemer's kingdom, transferred to the kingdom of the beast? We answer, it is time that the truth should be generally known; and that the attention of mankind should be called to the motives, the means, and the objects, of their benevolence. It is long since "pious frauds" were invented. These contrivances were practised, and even defended, by many of those characters

who are called the fathers of the church.—They thought it no harm, but a duty, to use means for the propagation of the gospel, which they would have condemned as mean and dishonest, if they had found others using them for other purposes. Those who read and study the history of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, which are generally supposed to be the purest ages of the church, will be at no loss to understand how "the man of sin" had the way opened for him to enter the temple of God, and to place his throne hard by the throne of the Most High. It was by means of the same pious frauds, which are now practised so extensively in the churches, that hundreds of petty antichrists arose; and when their ambitious claims to pre-eminence came into collision, the church was thrown into a flame, and it was thought to be better to have one infallible judge, than an hundred judges, who all pretended to infallibility, and whose decisions frequently ran in direct contradiction the one to the other. Thus the little horn, whose looks were more stout than his fellows, became the Supreme Arbiter, and his voice was the law.

There is something of a similar nature and which has similar practical results, in the charity of the present age. Although there are ten thousand discordant opinions and practices among christians, they have made a kind of truce; and seem to admit that all may be right, or at least that all may possibly arrive at the same end; although their means may be different. Hence it is considered a breach of charity even to speak of what is wrong in the modern means used for the propagation of the gospel. Mankind appear to have a strong desire for peace, and they would rather suffer errors to continue and multiply, than say or do any thing which would have a tendency to throw the world again into collision and tumult. But the eyes of this spiritual power, called the little horn, are exceedingly watchful, and he observes and lays hold of every thing, which can be made a means to promote his interest. This is the way in which he makes war with the saints, and prevails against them. Men do not consider, that the peace which is built on a false foundation, is like a house built on the sand. It is in fact no peace. It is the calm that precedes the storm. There can be no permanent peace on the earth until men give diligence to learn, receive into their hearts, and reduce into practice, in their lives and conversation, the truths of the word of God. Therefore, true charity will lead us to expose error, and

to develope and propagate the truth. For truth in religion, in morals, and in politics is the only foundation of social happiness.—Temporary purposes may indeed be promoted by concealing the truth, and the designs of the crafty may succeed for a time; but nothing can be permanent except what is built on this foundation; nothing else will be able to stand amidst the tremendous judgments that are about to come in the Christian world. The torrent of fire that rolls before the chariot of the Almighty will utterly consume—will not leave even a vestige of all those inventions and contrivances which men have framed for the advancement of their own particular views of religion, of their own sects, and their own aggrandizement, and which they have imposed upon the world, as proper means for promoting the gospel.

It is evident, that as long as any government exists and possesses authority, the spirit of that government will operate to the very extremity of its dominion. All the officers of government, and the subjects generally, will be actuated by one spirit. But this power, which is here represented by the fourth beast, is said to be "diverse from all the beasts that were before it;" and one part of this diversity consists, no doubt, in the fact that the spirit of the Roman church operates, not only among all who belong to her communion, but among many who disclaim all communion and co-operation with her. Our fathers of the Reformation renounced the government and errors of anti-Christian Rome. Still it is very plain that many of the churches of the Reformation continued to practice some of the errors of popery; and perhaps a little of the leaven of it was left in every one of them. This leaven, instead of being weakened by the lapse of years, has in fact grown stronger in every sect of Christians, just in proportion to the increase of their numbers and power. No religion can ever become fashionable in the world, without embracing some of the errors of popery. Thus the spirit that actuated the little horn at the beginning, and by which he was induced to act from his own authority, to make regulations and ordinances of his own, and change times and laws, does in fact actuate every powerful and numerous sect of Christians on the face of the earth. Hence the origin of the war with the saints, which must continue until the horn, or the power, shall not only be broken, but "the beast shall be slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame."

This is a representation of the scenes which are more fully developed in the 19th chapter of Revelation. The apostle declares, "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse and against his army. And the beast was taken, and the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These were both cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone." This is not a literal battle, but the last efforts of error against truth—the triumph of the word of God over all superstition and idolatry. In this last contest the beast shall be overpowered and compelled to yield himself a captive, and the false prophet shall be placed in the same condition; and after they are taken they are cast into the lake of fire. Although this beast is a spiritual power, yet he is embodied in a large number of mankind. As the government of Rome is a combination of men united for the support of a false religion, and as there is also a large number of men under the character of ministers of the gospel, who devote themselves exclusively to the support of that establishment, and are combined under one head, so these different combinations are called the beast and the false prophet, with respect to that particular church; but the same thing exists in substance in many other churches, and they are here represented as one combination. In the end they shall be cut off by some sudden judgments, coming immediately from God. They shall die in the midst of false hopes; and while they think of nothing but success in this world, and of happiness in the next, they shall find themselves at once precipitated into the flames of Tophet.

The other governments, the Chaldean, the Persian, and the Grecian, which are still in existence, and still possess something of the same spirit which they manifested in ancient times, shall, at the time when the fourth beast is slain, lose all power over the minds of men. The prophet saw that the three former beasts were not destroyed with the fourth. They lost their power, but did not then lose their existence. From this we infer, that after the anti-Christian power shall have been put down, the other governments of the world shall continue; but none of them shall be able to impede the progress of the gospel. They shall have no power to act as ferocious beasts in destroying the saints; but as their lives are said to be

merely prolonged for a season and time, we may believe they shall be finally overturned, and reorganized according to the principles of the gospel."

After some interesting remarks on the thirteenth and fourteenth, in connection with the eighteenth and twenty-seventh verses of the seventh chapter of Daniel, in which Mr. Reid shows the good grounds the church has to believe in the final triumph of truth over error and the establishment of the true religion, and the great opposing power to the supremacy of King Messiah put down, he continues:

"The Redeemer received this authority when he rose from the dead and ascended to his Father; but the Father is represented as coming to put him into the actual possession of it. In the first place he executes judgment upon his enemies, puts them down, and then gives the dominion to his only begotten Son. It is by no means difficult to conceive of the change which shall take place in the minds of men, and in the outward condition of the world at this blessed period. It will chiefly consist in the establishment of the authority of Jesus Christ over the hearts and consciences of men. At this time there are many who profess to have their hearts actuated by a sense of his authority, while in fact they deny him. In this sense, he has a nominal kingdom, while the beast possesses the power; but in that blessed period, the power shall also be his. If our hearts were fully under the authority of the Redeemer, we should not dare to neglect any moral duty. We should all be diligent in attending on the worship of God, according to his appointment. There would be no human inventions introduced into his worship. Men should not dare "to add to his words lest he should reprove them, and they should be found liars." They would bear in mind continually the great truth, that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, beholding the evil and the good." Knowing the terrors of the Lord, and the blessings of obedience, they would fear to offend him, and be solicitous to obey every command in the spirit. In a word, they would always have the fear of God before their eyes."

After some further remarks, in which Mr. R. shows the moral change that shall take place when the Lord shall build up, and King Messiah himself appears in his glory in the midst of Zion, he thus concludes his first dissertation:

"How awful, how exalted and majestic, how consistent, and how full of wisdom and

love, is the plan of God's providence and redemption, as it is developed in his word! It has never yet been fully developed; but, *from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.* The most enlightened mind, even in this last age, can see comparatively but little of its glory. Still, that little which we can see, is sufficient to convince us that there is a boundless ocean of grandeur and glory ready to come into view. The darkness is just beginning to disperse. The day star has already risen in the hearts of some of the true witnesses, and will yet rise in the hearts of many; and at length, all those whose minds are thus illuminated by the light of prophecy, shall be enabled to see the sun of righteousness, when he shall come to enlighten, to cheer, and to bless the earth."

DR. M'CRIE'S APPENDIX.

(Concluded from page 699.)

It will not be expected that I should enter here into an examination of the accusations brought against Presbyterians, as chargeable with intolerant and persecuting proceedings during the period of the Solemn League. I confine myself to the following general observations. In the *first* place, Seceders never pledged themselves by an approbation of all the acts and proceedings either of the state or of the church during that period. Their approbation of them was limited.* So far as it can be shewn that any acts of the church encroached on due Christian liberty, or that any acts of the state subjected good and peaceable subjects to punishment for matters purely religious, or imposed on them hardships which did not necessarily result from measures requisite to promote the public good and preserve the national safety, the principles of Seceders do not permit them to justify the conduct of the covenanters.

In the *second* place, the charges on this head are in some instances groundless, and in others greatly exaggerated. The fact is, that this period of the history of Britain has been most grossly misrepresented, and erroneous and distorted views of the great transactions by which it was distinguished, and of the characters and actions of the men who were principally engaged in them, have at last become general, and in some points almost universal.† By the most the nature

* Act and testimony, ut sup. p. 62. Answers to Nairn, ib. p. 283.

† I cannot help saying, that Presbyterians have shewn themselves strangely negligent in counteracting these false views; and I wish I had more rea-

of the cause in which the covenanters were embarked, the enemies by whom they were opposed, and the dangers with which they were surrounded, are not understood or not duly adverted to. The work to which they were called did not consist in the correction of the simple errors in doctrine, or corruptions which merely affected worship, ecclesiastical discipline, and Christian morals. It had for its object the removal of evils which were hurtful both in a religious and political view, and by which the liberties of church and state were equally affected. Prelacy was not only a deviation from the institution of Christ, which was to be confuted and removed by an appeal to scriptural authority and argument; but secular power, external violence, and political tyranny were annexed to it, and interwoven with the whole form and proceedings of the hierarchy. Bishops were not only domineering lords in the church—they were also tools in the hands of arbitrary monarchs and persecuting statesmen. Again, these evils were owing in a great measure to the exorbitant prerogative of the crown, from which, in con-

son, for adding, that they have suffered for their supineness by becoming the dupes of misrepresentation. Mr. Neal's history of the Puritans, a work which has been extensively read, affords a striking exemplification of this. Examinations of it, or counter statements in those instances in which they considered their connections as injured by the author, have been published by Episcopalians, Baptists, Quakers, and Socinians. Nothing of this kind has appeared from Presbyterians, although it might easily be shown that they had as much ground for complaint as any of the parties mentioned. The general merits of that work should have been an inducement to them to point out its mistakes, which were more readily credited than the grosser errors of less informed and more prejudiced writers.

I can only give one instance here. After stating the Presbyterian opinion concerning "the power of the keys," or of church-government, he adds: "The Independents claimed a like power for the brotherhood of every particular congregation, but without any civil sanctions or penalties annexed." (Hist. of Puritans, vol. iii. p. 266. Toulmin's ed.) Now, the annexation of civil penalties did not enter into the claim of the Presbyterians, in their disputes in favor of the divine right of church government in general, or of Presbytery. But, if it had entered into their claim (as I grant some of them in their writings vindicated the propriety of the annexation) still it would have formed no distinction between them and the Independents; the latter themselves being judges. "If the Magistrates' power (to which we give as much, and, as we think, more than the principles of the Presbyterian government will suffer them to yield) do but assist and back the sentence of other churches denouncing this non-communication against churches miscarrying, according to the nature of the crime, as they judge meet—then, without all controversy this our way of church proceeding will be every way as effectual as their other can be supposed to be," &c. (Apologetical Narration, by the five dissenting members of the Assembly of Divines, p. 18.)

sequence of the ecclesiastical supremacy vested in it, arose the arbitrary proceedings of the bishop's courts, and the illegal powers of the High Commission. While the ecclesiastical grievances sprung from political abuses, the political grievances might be traced in their turn to ecclesiastical abuses; and religion and policy equally demanded the correction of both. A co-operation of the several powers, and of the means competent to them, was therefore requisite. The use of religious means was primarily needful for giving life and animation to the work; but these alone could not redress all grievances. Means of a very different kind were necessary to restrain violence, to curb tyranny, to abolish the laws authorizing the evils complained of, and to substitute others in their place. If forcible opposition was made to this, or if conspiracies and factions were formed for the maintenance or restitution of the old oppressive system, it was necessarily to employ law and penalties for restraining or suppressing such attempts. In conducting any common measures having for their object the general good of society, civil or ecclesiastical, it is impossible altogether to avoid interfering with private liberty, or subjecting individuals to hardships and restraints which in some way affect their consciences and the full enjoyment of their religious privileges. Undeniable examples of this in recent times might be produced from the proceedings of religious societies which have no immediate connection with government. In the prosecution of the complex reformation in which our forefathers were engaged, opposed as it was by such adversaries as we have described, and while an intestine war raged in the country, it was not only extremely difficult for them to steer an even course, but it was impossible for them to avoid imposing restraints which would have been improper in an ordinary state of affairs; and tenderness apart, we ought to be cautious in censuring their conduct, as it may turn out, on an accurate knowledge of all the facts, that measures which at first view appeared intolerant or unreasonably severe, were indispensably necessary to the public safety. Nor should we overlook the character and designs of the sectaries, who rose on the suppression of the arbitrary and malignant party, and whose claims on the head of liberty of conscience were resisted, by men decidedly averse to the use of force in religious matters, as dangerous to the religion, liberties, and peace of the three kingdoms.*

* See the lives of Gataker and Lightfoot, in Biographia Britannica, vol. iv. p. 2166. vol v. p. 3296.

If the state of parties and the circumstances of the time be narrowly investigated, it will appear, I think, that the public proceedings, so far from being obnoxious to the charge of persecution, were upon the whole marked with uncommon lenity and tenderness, even amidst open war and the plots and cabals of factions, political and religious; and that that period, instead of being distinguished by restrictions on opinions and practices, was rather noted for the relaxation of ecclesiastical discipline and penal laws, and for a more licentious freedom and greater diversity of religion than ever prevailed in any period of British history.

In the *third* place, the most exceptionable acts and proceedings took place in consequence of the rejection of those salutary measures which the Presbyterians had advised. Suffice it to state here, that in consequence of the opposition of the Independents on the one hand and the Erastians on the other, the settlement of ecclesiastical government and discipline, according to the plan agreed on by the Westminster Assembly, was delayed from time to time, and ultimately refused by the parliament of England. In this disorganized state of the church, disorders of various kinds took place, innumerable sects sprung up, and errors and blasphemies, formerly unheard of and shocking to Christian ears, were every where propagated. Alarmed at these appearances, and seeing matters fast tending to anarchy and confusion in the nation, the parliament took the affair into their own hands, and published an ordinance intended to check and punish these evils. The Presbyterians by their declarations and petitions may be brought in as accessory to this measure; but it ought not to be forgotten that they had predicted the consequences which would arise from the dilatory proceedings of parliament; that they had uniformly testified an earnest desire to have religious errors and disorders corrected by spiritual means, and had avowed their conviction that a scriptural discipline, if erected and allowed freely to exert itself, would accomplish that desirable end, without the interposition of any secular violence.*

* In a work published two years before the time now referred to, Mr. Baillie made the following striking declaration: "Now, indeed, every monster walks in the street without controulment, while all ecclesiastic government is cast asleep; this too long inter-reign and mere anarchy hath invited every unclean creature to creep out of its cave, and show in public its mis-shapen face to all, who like to behold. But, if once the government of Christ were set up amongst us, as it is in the rest of the reformed churches, we know not what would

The last class of objections to which I propose adverting is that which relates to the Solemn League and Covenant. It will not be expected that I should say any thing here in the way of direct answer to those who find fault with the matter of that deed, or who deny the lawfulness and binding force of all covenants about matters of religion. The following considerations may perhaps tend to obviate some of the difficulties which are felt respecting the form, enactment, and obligation of the "Solemn League." Covenants and oaths are of the same general nature, and retain their proper and primary design, by whomsoever they are employed, and to whatever purposes they may be applied. Their lawfulness, utility, and obligation are recognized among all people, and recourse has been had to them on all great occasions that required their interposition. Revelation teaches more explicitly and corroborates their warrants and obligations, discovers new objects about which they may be employed, and gives directions as to the proper manner of performing these and other acts of moral duty. It expressly ascertains their use and application to moral and religious purposes, as well as to the ordinary affairs of human society. There is a law of morality and religion common to men, and the use of these bonds of fidelity in the peculiar concerns of Christians, or of ecclesiastical societies, does

impede it, by the sword of God alone, *without any secular violence*, to banish out of the land these spirits of error, in all meekness, humility, and love, by the force of truth convincing and satisfying the minds of the seduced. Episcopal courts were never fitted for the reclaiming of minds; their prisons, their fines, their pillories, their nose-slittings, their ear-cuttings, their cheek-burnings, did but hold down the flame to break out in season with the greater rage. But, the reformed Presbytery doth proceed in a spiritual method evidently fitted for the gaining of hearts. It is not prophecy, but a rational prediction bottomed upon reason and multiplied experience: Let England once be countenanced by her superior powers, to enjoy the just and necessary liberty of consistories for congregations, of presbyteries for counties, of synods for larger shires, and national assemblies for the whole land, as Scotland hath long possessed these by the unanimous consent of king and parliament, without the least prejudice to the civil state, but to the evident and confessed benefit thereof; or as the very protestants in France, by the concession of a Popish state and king, have enjoyed all these four spiritual courts the last four-score years and above: Put these holy and divine instruments into the hand of the Church of England, by the blessing of God thereupon, the sore and great evil of so many heresies and schisms shall quickly be cured, which now not only trouble the peace and welfare, but hazard the very subsistence both of church and kingdom: *without this mean, the State will toil itself in vain about the cure of such spiritual diseases.*" (Baillie's Dissuasive from the Errors of the time, pref. p. 7, 8.)

not abolish or supersede their use for any other lawful purpose. The gospel neither adds any essential duties to the law, nor confines it within narrower limits as to persons or objects. Covenants and oaths are sacred in themselves, independently of the matter of them. In respect of their matter and immediate end, they may be civil, political, or ecclesiastical, or they may be of a mixed kind, in which objects of a different nature are combined for the better attaining of some great purpose of public good; they may be private or public; spontaneous, and about matters to which persons were not previously bound, or framed and enjoined by authority; more general or particular; more extensive or limited; temporary or perpetual. They may formally consist in mutual stipulations between individuals or bodies of men, or they may consist in a common engagement to God, which is the strongest and most solemn way in which men can become bound to one another. They may relate to the intrinsic affairs of a church, or to the external state and interests of churches and nations. Any of these are lawful and obligatory when entered into on a due call and on proper grounds. All the temporal and common affairs of men are capable of a religious direction and use, and may be subordinated to the great ends of advancing the divine glory and spiritual interests. No duties, moral or religious, can be acceptably performed but by those who are acquainted with the gospel and instated in the covenant of grace; but this must not be confounded with their warrants or obligations. Of covenanting considered as a public duty performed by Christians solely in their ecclesiastical capacity—of the distinction between it and those engagements, virtual or actual, which are constitutive of churches or of church membership—of the distinction between it and the act of faith which brings persons to an interest in the covenant of grace, and ought not to be viewed as a promise of fidelity or engagement either to God or man—of the additional formality and solemn sanctions which discriminate it from that open profession of interest in God and obedience to him which is in some way made by all believers and in all churches—and of the special reasons and calls for these high sanctions and pledges—I do not propose here to speak.

All the noted covenants and leagues in which the interests of the Reformation throughout Europe were so deeply concerned, were of a mixed kind. They contained engagements on the part of the confederates to defend one another in the profession of the

Protestant religion, or in throwing off the authority of Rome, and correcting abuses, which were partly religious and partly political. They were entered into by public men, in their several secular capacities, as well as religious, and even by corporate bodies. Such was the League of Smalcalde, of the Swiss Cantons, and of the Evangelic Body in Germany, and the covenants of the Protestant princes and towns in France and in the Netherlands. Such also were the National Covenants in Britain. The Solemn League was a complex deed, both in its form and in its matter. It was not only a covenant with God, but also between people and people, for reciprocal benefit, and on certain mutual terms: security was stipulated on the one part and aid on the other, in the prosecution of its great objects. Religion formed the great and principal matter of it, but the promoting of this was not its sole object. National reformation and uniformity were combined with national liberty, safety, peace, loyalty, and law. It was adapted to "the dangerous, distressed, and deplorable estate" of the three "kingdoms," as well as of the "churches" in them. It was not, therefore, a mere church-covenant, but was framed, sworn, enjoined, and promoted by the public authorities of both church and state.

Some condemn this as an improper blending of heterogeneous matter, and think that our ancestors ought to have framed two separate covenants—one in defence of their civil liberties, and another for religious purposes. If those who express this opinion will make the trial, I apprehend they will find in it articles (and these not the least important,) which they will be unable to dispose of without making a third covenant, to be taken by all, or else adding them to each of the two, as equally pertaining to both. In either way they will inevitably plunge into what they call the old error of blending. There were peculiar duties which those in civil, and even in military stations, owed respecting the articles which were of a religious complexion; and *vice versa*, there were duties which ministers of the gospel and church courts owed respecting those which were civil, political, or military. The truth is, there is no article in the Solemn League that is either purely civil or purely religious. The civil things in it were connected with the religious, and the religious bore a relation to the national state and policy at that time. An accurate acquaintance with the circumstances in which our ancestors were placed, will, I presume, fully justify the

measure they adopted, and shew that they acted with the greatest wisdom, when they embodied in one common engagement to God and among themselves those things which Providence had joined together, and thus secured the vigorous and combined exertions of the friends of religion and liberty in a cause that was common to both. Nor did this imply any undue blending of things which, though connected, are in their nature distinct, nor any confounding of the constitution and powers of church and state, or of the respective offices and duties of the covenanters. It may just as well be said, (to make use of a familiar comparison,) that, when a mason and carpenter enter into a joint contract to finish a building, there is a confusion of trades, and that the one is to labor in the occupation of the other, instead of each doing his own work, and providing what is common to both. To separate the civil part of the covenant from the religious, and judge of it peace-meal, is to proceed on a fanciful supposition of something that never had an existence. As one complex and undivided whole was it framed, enacted, sworn, promoted; and as one whole it must be judged, and stand or fall.

The manner in which the covenant was enjoined to be taken in Scotland—"under all civil pains," has not been approved by Seceders in any of their public papers. Private writers of their connection who have vindicated the injunction clause, have not considered it as extending beyond exclusion from places of power and trust. Whatever may be the legal import of the phrase, I believe this interpretation accords with the fact; and, so far as I know, it cannot be shewn, that, with the consent and approbation of the public authorities, the covenant was forced upon any, or that the loss of liberty or of goods was incurred by them for simply refusing it. I frankly confess, that I have not yet seen any good reason, in point of religion, justice, or good policy, for condemning the exclusion of those who did not take the Solemn League from places of authority and public trust. It was the great bond of union and test of fidelity, among those who were embarked in that cause, in defence of which the Parliaments had already drawn their swords. A due regard to the high interests which were at stake, as well as their own safety and the maxims of prudence by which all people are guided in similar circumstances, required that they should carefully distinguish between those who were well or ill affected to their cause, and that they should not entrust the more

active management and defence of it, to such as were of the latter description. In the extraordinary circumstances in which they were placed, a mixed test, partly civil and partly religious, became so far necessary to ascertain common friends and foes. There might be (I have no doubt there were) individuals peaceably disposed, and even friendly to the cause of the Parliaments, so far as civil liberty was concerned, who yet scrupled at the stipulations in the covenant which related to religion. But laws cannot be made for individuals: it belonged to the public authorities to determine what description of persons it was safe, in the peculiar circumstances, to entrust with power; and in times of national confusion, danger, and war, when all that is valuable to a people may be put in jeopardy, individuals may be required to forego or may be restricted in the exercise of those rights which, in an ordinary and quiet state of society, they may be entitled to claim. The vindicating of such tests in certain times and in reference to certain parties, does not imply an approval of them in times or in reference to parties of a very different description.

The continued obligation of our National Covenants is of greater importance than any particular measure adopted in prosecuting them. In what I have to say on this branch of the subject, I shall keep the Solemn League more particularly in eye, both because it comprehends the substance of the National Covenant of Scotland, and because it has been the object of more frequent attack. It is not every lawful covenant, nor even every lawful covenant of a public nature, that is of permanent obligation. Some of both kinds, from their very nature or from other circumstances, may undoubtedly be temporary. The permanent obligation of the Solemn League results from the permanency of its nature and design, and of the parties entering into it, taken in connection with the public capacity in which it was established. Some talk of it as if it were a mere temporary expedient to which our forefathers had recourse in defending their civil and religious liberties; and, when they have paid a compliment to it in this point of view, they think they have no more concern with the matter. This is a very narrow and mistaken view of the deed. The most momentous transactions, and most deeply and durably affecting the welfare and the duty of nations and of churches, may be traced to the influence of the extraordinary and emergent circumstances of a particular period. The emergency which led to the formation

of the covenant is one thing, and the obligation of that covenant is quite another: the former might quickly pass away, while the latter may be permanent and perpetual. Nor is the obligation of the covenant to be determined by the temporary or changeable nature of its subordinate and accessory articles. Whatever may be said of some of the things engaged to in the Solemn League, there cannot be a doubt that in its great design and leading articles it was not temporary but permanent. Though the objects immediately contemplated by it—religious reformation and uniformity—had been accomplished, it would still have continued to oblige those who were under its bond to adhere to and maintain these attainments. But unhappily there is no need of having recourse to this line of argument: its grand stipulations remain to this day unfulfilled. The Solemn League was a national covenant and oath, in every point of view,—in its matter, its form, the authority by which it was enjoined, the capacities in which it was sworn, and the manner in which it was ratified. It was a sacred league between kingdom and kingdom with respect to their religious as well as their secular interests, and at the same time a covenant in which they jointly swore to God to perform all the articles contained in it. National religion, national safety, liberty and peace, were the great objects which it embraced. It was not a mere agreement or confederation (however solemn) of individuals or private persons (however numerous), entering spontaneously and of their own accord into a common engagement. It was framed and concluded by the representatives of kingdoms in concurrence with those of the church; it was sworn by them in their public capacity; at their call and by their authority, it was afterwards sworn by the body of the people in their different ranks and orders; and finally it was ratified and pronounced valid by laws both civil and ecclesiastical. The public faith was thus plighted by all the organs through which a nation is accustomed to express its mind and will. Nothing was wanting to complete the national tie, and to render it permanent; unless it should be maintained that absolute unanimity is necessary, and that a society cannot contract lawful engagements to God or man, as long as there are individuals who oppose and are dissentient. Sanctions less sacred, and pledges less numerous, would have given another nation, or even an individual, a perfect right to demand from Britain the fulfilment of any treaty or contract; and shall not God, who was not only a wit-

ness but the principal party, and whose honor and interests were immediately concerned, in this transaction, have a like claim; or shall we "break the covenant and escape?"

Some of the principles on which it has been attempted to loose this sacred tie, are so opposite to the common sentiments of mankind, that it is not necessary to refute them; such as, that covenants, vows, and oaths, cannot superadd any obligation to that which we are previously under by the law of God: and, that their obligation on posterity consists merely in the influence of example. There is another objection which is of a more specious kind and lays claim to greater accuracy, but which on examination will be found both unsolid and inaccurate. It is pleaded, that it is only in the character of church-members that persons can enter into religious covenants or be bound by them; and that the covenants of this country can be called national on no other ground than because the majority of the inhabitants in their individual character voluntarily entered into them. At present I can only state some general considerations tending to show the fallacy of this view of the subject. By church-members may be meant either those who are in actual communion with a particular organized church, or those who stand in a general relation to the church universal; but in neither of these senses can it be said that religious covenants or bonds are incompetent or non-obligatory in every other character.—This is to restrict the authority of the divine law in reference to moral duties, and to limit the obligations which result from it, in a way that is not warranted either by Scripture or reason. How can that which is founded on the moral law, and which is moral-natural, not positive, be confined to church-members, or to Christians in the character of church-members only? The doctrine in question is also highly objectionable, as it unduly restricts the religious character of men, and the sphere of their action about religious matters, whether viewed as individuals or as formed into societies and communities. They are bound to act for the honor of God, and are capable of contracting sacred obligations, (sacred both in their nature and in their objects) in all the characters and capacities which they sustain. I know no good reason for holding, that when a company of men or a society act about religion, or engage in religious exercises, they are thereby converted into a church, or act merely and properly as church members. Families are not churches, nor are they constituted properly for a religious purpose: yet they have a religious character,

and are bound to act according to it in honoring and serving God, and are capable of contracting religious obligations. Nations also have a religious character, and may act about the affairs of religion. They may make their professions of Christianity, and legally authorize its institutions, without being turned into a church; and why may they not also come under an oath and covenant with reference to it, which shall be nationally binding? Covenanting may be said to be by a nation as brought into a church-state, acting in this religious capacity—the oath may be dispensed by ministers of the gospel and accompanied by the usual exercises of religion in the church, and yet it may not be an ecclesiastical deed. The marriage covenant and vow is founded on the original law, and its duties, as well as the relation which it establishes, are common to men, and of a civil kind. Yet among Christians it is mixed with religious engagements, and celebrated religiously in the church. Ministers of the gospel officiate in dispensing the vow, and accompany it with the word and prayer. The parties are bound to marry in the Lord, and to live together as Christians. But is the marriage vow on that account ecclesiastical, or do the parties engage as church-members only? The Christian character is, in such cases, combined with the natural, domestic, civil, and political. Much confusion also arises on this subject from not attending to the specific object of our national covenants, and the nature of their stipulations, by which they are distinguished from mere church-covenants. I shall only add that several objections usually adduced on this head may be obviated by keeping in mind, that the obligation in question is of a moral kind, and that God is the principal party who exacts the fulfilment of the bond.

If there is any truth in the statements that have now been made, the question respecting the obligation of the British covenants is deeply interesting to the present generation. The identity of a nation, as existing through different ages, is, in all moral respects, as real as the identity of an individual through the whole period of his life. The individuals that compose it, like the particles of matter in the human body, pass away and are succeeded by others; but the body politic continues essentially the same. If Britain contracted a moral obligation, in virtue of a solemn national covenant for religion and reformation, that obligation must attach to her until it has been discharged. Have the pledges given by the nation been yet redeemed? Do not the principal stipulations in

the covenant remain unfulfilled at this day? Are we not as a people still bound by that engagement to see these things done? Has the lapse of time cancelled the bond? Or, will a change of sentiments and views set us free from its tie? Is it not the duty of all the friends of reformation to endeavor to keep alive a sense of this obligation on the public mind? But, although all ranks and classes in the nation should lose impressions of it, and although there should not be a single religious denomination, nor even a single individual, in the land, to remind them of it, will it not be held in remembrance by One, with whom "a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years?"

By this time the reader must be aware of the general opinion which I entertain of the basis on which the two largest Synods of the Secession have lately united. It is not my intention to enter into any particular examination of the articles of that agreement. Complexly taken they afford undeniable proof of a complete recession from the ground originally occupied by Seceders. The exception made to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, is expressed in such a way as to leave on them the imputation of teaching persecuting principles in matters of religion, and in such a way as to set aside, or to throw loose, the whole doctrine which they teach respecting the exercise of magistratical authority about these matters. Besides, the united Synod merely "retain" these books, "as (to use their own words) the confession of our faith, expressive of the sense in which we understand the Holy Scriptures;" but do not receive them, as was formerly done by the Church of Scotland and in the Secession, under the consideration of their being subordinate standards of uniformity for the three nations. The other standards, the Westminster "Form of Church-government," and "Directory," are entirely excluded from the basis. The general statement on the head of Presbyterian government is chargeable with ambiguity, and, unless inadvertancy be pleaded, is evasive.

The expression of veneration for our reforming ancestors, and of a warm sense of the value of their efforts "in the cause of civil and religious liberty," I have no doubt, is "unfeigned;" and the approval of "the method adopted by them for mutual excitement and encouragement by solemn confederation and vows to God," is so far good.—But I must be allowed to add, that this is saying no more than has been often said, by those friends of civil and religious liberty whose system of religion was very opposite

to that of our reforming ancestors; and that it is a very poor substitute for that explicit approbation of and adherence to the covenanted reformation of Britain which Seceders formerly avouched. This is all that the United Synod have to say respecting our National Covenants; they "approve of the method adopted—by solemn confederation and vows to God;" but they have not a word to say on the present or continued obligation of these vows. For, surely, it was not expected that the public would consider this as included in the following declaration: "We acknowledge that we are under high obligations to maintain and promote the work of reformation begun, and to a great extent carried on by them." Nothing, in fact, could be more disgraceful to these covenants than to attempt to bring them in under the cover of such an expression: and, after the open, decided, express, and repeated avowals of the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms, in the former profession, and in the ordination-formula, of the two bodies now composing the Union, the omission of every thing of this kind, and the careful exclusion of the very names of these covenants, can be viewed in no other light than a practical renunciation of their obligation, and a rescinding of all former declarations in favor of it. If the United Synod were the same with the original seceding body, how severely would they condemn themselves by the charge which they once and again brought against the established church after the revolution, because "they did not, by any particular act of Assembly, assert the obligation of our covenants, national and solemn league, and their binding force upon posterity."^{*} On the provision made by the articles for the practice of covenanting, I have only to observe, that this exercise was all along viewed, in that part of the secession by which it was observed, as the most solemn mode of sealing the common profession of the whole body: that as such it was engaged in at the express call of the supreme judicatory: and that, when the United Synod cannot say that "the circumstances of Providence require it," I can scarcely persuade myself that it is seriously contemplated to practice this sacred service in a manner which would discredit it, and which is totally irreconcilable with Presbyterian principles.[†] With respect to the religious clause

in some Burgess oaths which occasioned the original strife, the preamble to the Basis supposes that there are some "towns where it may still exist," and all the provision it makes with respect to this is, that "both Synods agree to use what may appear to them the most proper means for obtaining the abolition" of it. No provision is made, that, if they shall be unsuccessful in their applications for an abolition of it, the oath shall not be taken in the united society; although it is well known that one of the parties had all along maintained that Seceders involved themselves in contradiction by swearing it, and continued down to the time of the Union, to require all intrants to public office among them to declare their solemn approbation of an act condemning it in this point of view. They are thus involved in a judicial allowance of what they hold to be sinful; and have recognized a principle which may be applied to an indefinite extent, and which ought to have been guarded against with the utmost care, as it enters into all the loose plans of communion which are so fashionable in the present day. This is still more evident from the engagement which they have come under, that they "shall carefully abstain from agitating in future the questions which occasioned" the separation. It is proposed that the united Synod shall prepare a Testimony, "containing the substance of the Judicial Act and Testimony, the Act concerning the doctrine of grace, and the Answers to Nairn's Reasons of Dissent." What some may understand by *the substance* it may be difficult to say; but if the proposed Testimony really contain the substance of the first and last named of these papers, the basis will not support the superstructure. In answer to all this, some will say, We are at full liberty to hold all our principles as formerly. But such persons should remember, that the question is not about *their* principles, but the principles, or rather the public profession, of the body; and that it has been chiefly by means of the latter, that the declarative glory of God has been promoted in every age, and his truths and cause preserved and transmitted to posterity. It is painful to me to be obliged to speak in this manner of the terms of a union, which it would have filled my heart with delight to see established on a solid and scrip-

the performance of the duty was suitable to the circumstances of their respective congregations; but now they must determine whether Providence is requiring the duty, or in other words, whether it be at all a duty incumbent on the church in the present times.

^{*} Act and Testimony, in Display, i. 90. Acknowledgement of Sins, ib. 231.

[†] Formerly sessions were left to determine when

tural foundation. But in such cases there is a duty incumbent on all the friends of the cause of the reformation and the secession: and this they must discharge whatever it may cost them, and regardless of the obloquy that they may hereby incur. They are sacredly bound to adhere to that cause, to confess it, and, according to the calls of providence, to appear openly in its defence. It cannot but be grieving to them to find that the attempt made to heal the breach among its professed friends has discovered that disaffection to it existed to a greater extent than they could have imagined. They may be accused as the enemies of peace and union. But they have this consolation, that they still occupy that ground on which their fathers displayed a faithful testimony for the truths and laws of Christ against prevailing defection; and that they are adhering, without any reservation, or any mark of dissent, to that testimony, and to those books of public authority which were formerly agreed on for settling and preserving religious unity and communion on the most extended scale. And they are encouraged to maintain this ground by the hope which they still cherish, that the God of their fathers and of their vows, will yet, in his merciful providence, bring round a time of reformation; and that, when this period shall have arrived, the Westminster Standards may form a rallying point around which the scattered friends of religion, in this land, shall meet, and again happily combine.

[For the Religious Monitor.]

RULES

Recommended by the Associate Presbytery of Cambridge, for the direction of Praying Societies under their inspection.

It hath ever been the practice of the Lord's people to associate with one another, not only from the pleasure and satisfaction they have in each others' company, which is indeed a strong inducement, as David professeth, That the saints on earth and the excellent were his delight: but particularly, as it is a means for promoting their growth and improvement in spiritual knowledge, and tends to their confirmation and establishment in the doctrines of the gospel, and especially in the present truth. It serves also to excite a spirit of piety and practical religion, and to encourage one another in the good ways of the Lord; "As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

To this duty of Christian fellowship the apostles frequently exhort the churches. Let us consider one another, says Paul to the

Hebrews, to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling ourselves together as the manner of some is.— And again, exhort one another daily. And says he to the Thessalonians: Wherefore, comfort or exhort yourselves together, and edify one another. And says Jude, But, ye beloved, build up yourself in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. It is what hath God's special approbation in a dead and languishing state of the church, as we see in Mal. iii. 16. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And there is a promise annexed to such social praying. If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. And we find the actual accomplishment of that promise in Peter's deliverance out of prison at the earnest prayer of the disciples: He came to the house of Mary &c., where many were gathered together praying.

This duty and exercise hath been recommended by the church Judicatories at different times. To mention an instance or two. The Associate presbytery soon after their secession from the established church of Scotland, made and passed the following act.

Act of the Associate Presbytery concerning Fellowship meetings. DUNFERMLINE, Aug. 12, 1740.

"Which day and place, the Associate Presbytery being met, they recommend to such as have acceded to them, to form themselves into societies for prayer and Christian conference; this being a duty commanded in the word of God, and which hath been much countenanced of the Lord. Mal. iii. 16. And in these societies instead of questions that may not be so much for edification, that together with a diligent reading of the holy Scriptures, they also carefully peruse our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, larger and shorter, and read the Scripture proofs subjoined to the same; that they may see that their faith as to these articles of religion, does not terminate on human, but upon the divine testimony in the word: and that they make use of such approved helps, in opening up these principles, as they may have at hand. Moreover, the Presbytery recommend unto the said societies and acceders, that they study to be acquainted with the public cause of Christ. Our reformation principles, and the testimony of the day, in opposition to that flood of defection and backsliding, which

the Judicatories of the established church have been so long going into. And they further earnestly recommend that parents and masters of families be careful to instruct their children and servants in these principles."

A like act was passed by the Associate Presbytery in this country, entitled, An Act of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, concerning societies for prayer and conference.

PHILADELPHIA, April 23, 1793.

"The Associate Presbytery, having been requested to give their judgment concerning the nature of those societies for religious exercises and mutual edification into which the people in every congregation under their inspection ought to form themselves, agreed to the following declaration.

The Presbytery on this occasion, entreat every church member to consider, that he is intrusted with some talent which he is diligently to lay out for the declarative glory of God, and the good of his church; lest he be like the slothful servant who laid up his talent in a napkin. Church members are bound to edify, exhort and comfort one another, Isa. ii. 3. Zech. viii. 21. 1st Thess. v. 11. Heb. iii. 13. They are to speak often one to another of the things of God, Mal. iii. 16. They are to be in the use of joint prayer to which the Lord encourages them by a special promise. Mat. xviii. 19. The Presbytery judge that church members are chargeable with a great and inexcusable neglect of these duties, while they do not meet together for joint prayer, after the example of those that were gathered together for prayer in the house of Mary the mother of Mark, Acts, xii. 12, endeavoring as their providential situations permit, to do so not only occasionally but at stated times.

Besides the exercise of singing psalms, reading a portion of scripture, and prayer, in which a considerable part of the time of each of these meetings ought to be employed, we recommend the proposing of a question concerning some branch of practical and experimental religion: on which question all the members ought to speak by turns, no one interrupting another, and each of them endeavoring to deliver his mind in few words, and as pertinent to the purpose as may be, singly aiming at his own and his brethren's edification.

Such societies ought to be private, none being admitted to act as members in prayer and speaking to a question, but such as are of the same church communion. The nature and ends of such societies seem to require that they be composed of such as are,

as much as can be attained, of one mind and judgment, that there may be no jarring in their prayers and conversation: and also, that the acquaintance of all the members with the principles of christianity, and the readiness of each of them to esteem his brother as better than himself, ought always to be such as may give ground to expect that they will mutually edify one another.

The exercise of gifts in these societies in spiritual discourse and joint prayers is of a private nature, and the edification to be expected therefrom is mutual. Wherefore the Presbytery judge it to be altogether irregular for a promiscuous multitude to be present at such societies, or that they should be held in a public manner, like the assemblies for the preaching of the word, and administration of the sacraments. The tendency of this irregularity is to annihilate the distinction which is absolutely necessary to the order of Christ's church, and to the purity of his ordinances, between the exercise of spiritual gifts in the way of office to which some only are called and set apart, and that exercise of them for mutual edification which is private and the common duty of church members."

In order that societies for prayer and religious converse may be conducted so as to attain their end, it is necessary that there be distinct and written rules laid down, to which all the members should conform. As the following:

RULE I.

It is proper to have some fixed place and time of meeting, which ought not to be altered except for weighty reasons, so that all excuses arising from uncertainty of the place or ignorance of the time may be prevented. Although no set number of times of meetings be expressly commanded or required in the word of God, yet the members ought to meet once a week, or otherwise, as often as it is in their power so to do.

II.

In order to preserve the harmony that ought to exist in the spiritual exercise of such a society, it is necessary that the members should be agreed in their religious profession, and that they be of the same church communion. Agreement as to the matter is essential to acceptable social prayer: Where two of you, saith our Lord, agree on earth, touching any thing, &c. Union of sentiment, yea, even of expression, seems required by the apostle of the Corinthians in order to more full communion: I beseech you, says he, that ye all speak the same thing.

III.

The members shall study to attend punctually at the place and time agreed upon: and as soon as two or three of the members are met, and the hour appointed come, they shall begin the exercises of the meeting with praise, reading a portion of scripture, and prayer. Members shall take their turn, and he who begins shall be considered as the president during that meeting. If he whose turn it is, be not present at the commencement, the next in order present shall take his place during that meeting. After prayer, he who acts as president shall propose a question for discussion, which had been proposed at the last meeting, and all members shall speak what occurs to them in their turns: and if time permit, other questions may be proposed by other members: then one or two may be employed in prayer, and the meeting closed with singing.

IV.

As to the nature of the questions, conferences and communications in general, they should be more of a practical than speculative nature, such as may be good to the use of edifying, avoiding all abstruse and curious inquiries, and such as are likely to occasion disputation, admitting none but such as are useful for the exercise and practice of christians, and such as respect sin and duty.

V.

That members in speaking, study brevity, keeping their eye as much as possible upon the purport of the question, and giving a practical turn thereto, avoiding all unnecessary length and repetition, and what may be foreign to the point.

VI.

Let no member interrupt another when speaking on the question, or slight and despise his answer although not so pertinent to the purpose; yet, if any person be habitually addicted to idle repetitions and tedious speeches, and that often foreign to the subject, some one of the members may speak to him by himself with all prudence, and in the spirit of meekness discover to him his failing, and modestly caution him against the like for the future.

VII.

All jarring, contention, and needless debates should be carefully guarded against; and if any thing of that nature be like to arise, it is proper that the president call upon the meeting to break off and go to prayer. If in the course of conversation any member is offended with any thing that hath fallen from another in speaking, it may be spoken of after the meeting is over, but not

in the time of it; prudence must however, be used.

VIII.

Every member ought to beware of having or discovering any thing of an opinionative or dictatorial spirit or manner, and should studiously guard against any heat, ill will or grudge at his brother, for differing from him in sentiment about some things; the sad effects of such a disposition is obvious, and bewrays a want of that meekness which is the ornament of the christian character.

IX.

If any member fall into sin whereby he is rendered publicly scandalous, he is to be excluded from the society until he satisfy the church, and the scandal be regularly purged. If the scandal is not acknowledged, or the charge refused, and there are nothing but vague reports to proceed upon, it will be more prudent for the society not to be precipitate in excluding the defamed member, at least until the session of the place enter upon a judicial cognizance of the affair.

X.

If personal differences should arise between any of the members belonging to the society, the matter ought, if possible, to be adjusted between themselves, and conducted in a private, not in a social capacity. Societies interfering in private differences, have too much the appearance of judicial procedure, which ought by all means to be avoided in private christian societies; the consequences are often detrimental.

XI.

Sometimes societies have a call in Providence to the exercise of extraordinary prayer and humiliation, and sometimes to thanksgiving. When this is the case, it should be gone about with serious deliberation. The present calls of Providence should be weighed, the particular reasons condescended upon, that all may be convinced of their weight and importance? and either the next ordinary day of meeting, or some other day may be fixed on for that purpose, as may best suit members.

XII.

When there is no sermon in the congregation on the Sabbath, and members cannot attend at a neighboring congregation, they should meet as usual, and besides praise, reading the scriptures and prayer, they may also read some pious practical book or approved sermons, and thus sanctify the Sabbath to the mutual edification of one another.

XIII.

When the religious exercise of the society is over, members who have been absent

at the former meeting may be called upon to state their reasons: and if any member hath been absent for three meetings successively, or if the society have got notice of any irregularity in his practice, they shall send one or two of their members to inquire after him; after hearing the report of members, and after getting what further information the case may require, the society shall judge whether it be most for the edification of the society to retain or exclude the offending member.

XIV.

If any make application for admission let it be done through some of the members with whom they are best acquainted, and let them inform their brethren of the matter; and if from personal knowledge they can certify the society of the piety, prudence, and regularity of him who is seeking admission, then let him be received with the consent of the whole: but if for good reasons any person is not admitted, no injury is done to him, nor is the society bound to give reasons. Every person who enjoys church privileges is not qualified for being a member of a praying society. He may be sound in the faith and blameless in his outward walk who is of such a temper and disposition as would make a very troublesome and hurtful member if admitted into such close connexion and familiarity.

XV.

It may be proper for the encouragement of young persons who appear serious and well disposed, to admit them as hearers into society, where they have an opportunity of attending, especially where they show any desire for it, as it hath a powerful influence upon young minds, and tends to give early impressions of religion.

XVI.

Young people and also women should form themselves into separate praying societies, but when this is not convenient they should attend the men's societies.

XVII.

Let all the members of the society and any who are occasionally admitted to join with them, beware of divulging what is said or done in the society to the offence and prejudice of any of his brethren. Religious exercise is what none need be ashamed of, but occurrences may often fall out which would be the height of imprudence to reveal to the world. Strangers who are admitted occasionally, are to be subject to the rules of the society, as well as members, while and as often as they attend. The rules ought to be frequently read, particularly on the admission of new members.

In fine, the great end and design of the society ought to be kept in view throughout viz: advancement of spiritual knowledge, increase of zeal, and excitement to practice; particularly the promoting and furthering one another's acquaintance with the testimony of the day, bringing into view its peculiar principles, and guarding one another against a walk inconsistent with it.

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF
THE MARRIAGE STATE;

As entered into, with religious or irreligious characters; represented under the similitude of a dream.

From an old Author.*

I fancied myself travelling in the eastern parts of the world; and, at last, coming to the city of old Babylon, where I was much amused in viewing the curiosities of the place. I observed the city, and it appeared in different views. In one part, the people were taken up in revellings, feasting, diversions, and splendid appearances. In the other part they were more reserved, and were much occupied in the decency of their houses and streets, and in the regularity of their towers, fortifications, &c., but without any appearance of danger or alarm.

I next took a prospect of the whole city together, from a rising ground where I saw a booth, and at the door an old man, of whom I inquired if he had a prospect glass, whereby I might be favored with a full view of that royal city, which I supposed to be the metropolis of the world. He fetched out his perspective, and told me, he would show me the situation of the place, whereby I might be convinced that its condition was not so happy, nor its glory so majestic, as I imagined. So I took a distinct view of it. The foundation appeared to rest upon nothing but bogs and quicksands which could not possibly sustain the buildings? I observed also, that the ground about it consisted of bituminous, sulphureous matter, ready to break into flames; but all the inhabitants of the city were in a state of stupefaction, insensible of the danger to which they were hourly exposed.

When I had thought on these things, such was my disappointment, and the horror that seized me, that I was neither able to bear the sight, nor to flee from it. On entering the booth, I found four young men very carefully examining a map, seeming to make very particular remarks, and diligent observations; and sometimes earnestly inquiring the old

* Published by the London Tract Society.

man's judgment. It was the map of Babylon and Canaan with all the roads between the two places; they having had a full prospect of the same things which I had just beheld, and being determined to leave their native country, and travel to the latter place. The old man being a native of Canaan, and acquainted with both countries, as well as the roads from one to the other, they applied to him for instruction.

These four young men appeared so like each other in their apparel, speech and behavior, as well as some of their features, that I took them all to have been brothers; and knew nothing to the contrary, until I became acquainted with a person who had some knowledge of the places where they were born. He informed me, that two of them were sons of the bondwoman; but the other two were sons of the free-woman. Gal. iv. 22—31.

So I observed them; and they all made preparation, seemingly with vigorous resolution, for their journey; and amongst other consultations with the old man, they earnestly craved his advice, whether it was expedient for each of them to take along with him a female companion. This he encouraged them to do, provided they were such as were disposed to go the same way, and had their hearts engaged to seek the same country with them; but he admonished them by all means to avoid such companions as had no knowledge of, or delight in, the way they designed to travel.

He pointed out to them many difficulties in the way, where the company of strangers would be very dangerous; told them the need they would find of being strengthened and encouraged in the way, rather than hindered and discouraged; and reasoned much upon the evil that would attend such companions as took no delight in the way, contrasting it with the advantages they might expect in the company of such as took pleasure, and would endeavor to animate them therein. He further informed them, in many instances, what bad effects travellers, who had formerly gone that way, had found from improper companions; and that (to prevent the like inconveniences) the king of the country had forbidden any of his subjects to join with strangers as companions in that journey; and therefore, he earnestly cautioned them, whatever they did, to be exceedingly careful in their choice.

At first, none of them seemed to relish his counsel; for they had all either contracted some acquaintance with, or placed their fancy upon, females who were natives of

Babylon, their instructor, however, insisted on the pernicious consequences which were sure to attend their having such companions; and told them, that the king had appointed one to attend them in their journey, whose name was Self-Denial, without whose company it would be impossible ever to reach the borders of Canaan; and that to choose a stranger for a companion would be such an insult to him at the first setting out, as might cause misunderstanding all the way. For his part, he told them, that to pretend to travel to Canaan, and choose a Babylonian for a companion, was such a contradiction, that he could not but very much doubt their sincerity and he must discharge his conscience by giving them timely admonition.

The eldest son of the bond-woman could not be moved by all these arguments, but chose one who was an utter stranger to the path, had no delight in, nor desire thereto; and when he had covenanted with her, she proved so averse to go along with him, and so reluctant to his pursuing his intended journey, that she prevailed upon him to desist from his purpose; so he settled with her in Babylon; and they were both there, and perished, when the city was destroyed.

But the younger brother (son of the bond-woman) had more regard to the counsel given him, and seemed more heedful in his choice. He sought in a slight manner to get a companion that would go along with him: so at last he met with one who appeared willing to comply with his desire, though she had no knowledge of the way, nor any inclination to it, only as he was disposed to undertake the journey, she would condescend to accompany him. This pleased the young man very well, as he thought he should both gratify himself in the choice of a companion, and also act conformably to his directions; but he did not consider, that whilst her mind was thus indifferent, her company must needs be very unprofitable. However, they were married; and she (as good as her word) accompanied him; and they set out both together on their journey; but her indifferent mind soon prevailed so as to cool his warm affections, and caused their advances to be very slow. They would frequently sit down in the shade, and divert themselves with trifles, and often turn aside out of the way; which made their progress very small. This manner of loitering prevailed more and more, until they came to a valley by the river Euphrates, where they turned aside and fell asleep; and while they slept, the waters arose, and the flood swept them both away.

As for the younger son of the free-woman

man, when he had heard the admonitions, they made some deep impressions upon his mind, and filled him with some awful apprehensions; for he was convinced of the pernicious consequences which would attend such company, and appeared very solicitous to avoid them; but some way or other he proved to be entangled with a daughter of the Chaldees, which betwixt the instructions he had received, and his own unguarded affections, caused some strugglings in his mind; for though the person was of a complaisant disposition, and did not seem at all reluctant to the things he had in view; yet he plainly perceived she had no real taste for them; and that her innate disposition was more to Babylon than Canaan. She had never been convinced of the misery and ruin approaching her native country: nor had she ever been acquainted with the pleasures and delights of that land which he was seeking after; nor had she any desire to the way; but his strong inclination stimulated him to reason upon every thing in the most advantageous and promising light, and to put the most favorable construction upon every circumstance; as thus: "That her complaisance was such, that she would not be any hindrance to him: that, by his example, he might engage her mind to that which she had no inclination to at present; that those engagements, which he should enter into with her, might be performed without interfering with the concerns of his journey; that it was very hard to be prohibited from the enjoyment of one, who, in all other respects, appeared so desirable; and that probably he might never find a companion complete in every point," &c. In short, the young man persisted in this kind of reasoning, until he had so far stupified his senses, that he went one evening, after both sun and moon were gone down, and joined hands with this Babylonian. In the morning he became sensible of his rashness, but it was too late to recall it. He was now aware into what snares he had brought himself, and what inconveniences must attend his journey; and that now he had no way left but to make the best he could of the matter; and to grapple with it as well as it should please God to enable him.

So, after some anxious thoughts and bitter reflections, he endeavored to smother his grief as well as he could, and betook himself to his journey; exerting his utmost skill and power to take his companion along with him; but alas! when he attempted to lead her into the way, he found she had no use of her feet; she could not move a step farther than he carried her, and a heavy burden she pro-

ved. When he met with distresses, or disappointments, he would begin to express his grief, and to unbosom his mind to his companion; but she had no ears to hear, no understanding, or heart to sympathize with him, nor was she capable of knowing the nature of his complaints. If he was beset with robbers, wild beasts, serpents, or any annoyance, he would sometimes make his complaint to her: but she could neither assist nor comfort him: if he wanted direction in any part of his way, she could not give him any counsel; if he was sick or wounded, and wanted cordials, or oils to his wounds, she had no power to administer any relief; and as she was never capable of yielding him any succour or comfort in his sufferings, neither was she ever capable of partaking of any of his enjoyments: if he met with any gardens of spices or refreshing springs by the way, he would offer her to eat and drink with him; but she had no taste; if he found sweet flowers, he would pluck and give them to her; but she had no smell, nor could have any delight in them; if he had any delightful prospects by the way, he would endeavor to show them to his companion; but she had no eyes to see them; if he met with any fellow-travellers by the way, he would invite her to enjoy their company; but she was never sociable with any person who spoke the language of Canaan, for it was a language which she had not learned. Thus, whatever grief befel him, or whatever enjoyments he was favored with, he never found any sympathy or congratulation from her, nor was she of the least use to him all the way; nor were her affections ever moved, otherwise than often to show a disgust or disturbance of mind.

But as she had no life, capacity, sense, nor activity in the chosen part, she had so much the more vivacity in things pertaining to her own element; so that when she could draw him aside out of the way, she would discover such a sprightliness, be so pleasant and diverting, and all her conversation so engaging, that it often prevailed upon him to turn aside with her, and proved a very great hindrance in his journey; for though it was not in his power to find any thing in his way that would divert or influence her mind, yet she frequently found out something in her own path which did insensibly draw away his heart, by which he was many times entangled.

Another thing I observed, that, after he had begun his journey, the King of Israel (whose subject he was) sent him some young lambs to feed, with a strict charge to teach

them diligently, and bring them up in his nurture and admonition; but the performance of this command was rendered impracticable; for as he instructed them to go right, she induced them to wander: as he endeavored to gather them, she scattered them; and as he fed them with wholesome food, she would surfeit them with poisonous herbs; so, which way the King disposed of them afterwards I never knew; but they never prospered under his care.

Thus her company never yielded him the least benefit or assistance through his whole journey; but was an alloy to all his joys, and an aggravation to all his sorrows; and it frequently caused him much regret of mind, to think of his own unadvised engagement, and of the neglect of duty, wandering, and lost time, which it had been the occasion of to him; as well as to observe the wretched stupefaction of her mind, which was incapable of sharing in any of his enjoyments, or of being affected with any of his calamities; insomuch, that it turned his pleasant journey into a wearisome travel, through a lonesome wilderness.

At last (after many dull hours, fatigues, and tiresome steps) he arrived near the borders of the land, upon the bank of the river Jordan; where, in the midst of the stream, he beheld a man in a rich priestly vesture, standing to stop the torrent till he was passed over; but as, with great joy, he was taking some of his last steps, just ready to set his feet on Canaan's shore, he looked behind him, and beheld his companion upon the sand, and the river turned with such an overflow, as carried her along the rapid stream into the Dead Sea.

As for the elder brother, son of the free-woman, when he had heard the instructions and admonitions, they wrought some serious reflections in his mind, and made him deliberate. So when he saw the beauty and graceful mien, and heard the courteous conversation, of the Babylonish females, he would withdraw from them, and turn away his eyes, lest his heart should be ensnared. However, it sometimes fell in his way to have conversation with some who appeared very agreeable and engaging, and might have some influence on his affections; especially one whose person, birth, circumstances, virtues, and accomplishments, rendered her extremely agreeable, and made her appear very promising to make a valuable companion; insomuch, that many of his acquaintance greatly encouraged him to embrace the opportunity of obtaining such a prize. This made him stagger a little, (for

indeed she wanted no accomplishment but the language of Canaan to make her just such an one as heart could wish,) and caused him to reason in his own mind with such interrogations and replies as these:—

Q. Can I expect to find an object more desirable, or one more likely to be a happy companion and a help-meet?

A. She may prove so to a person who can stay with her in Babylon; but as I am bound to another country, I might find bitterness in that which would appear happiness to another.

Q. But have I not reason to hope, that a person so accomplished may prove a suitable companion?

A. A person may be accomplished with all the refinements and excellencies of Babylon, so as to appear superior to many; and yet not possess that which constitutes a special difference between a Babylonian and an Israelite.

Q. But is it not very censorious to look upon such a worthy person as no better than a mere Babylonian?

A. As the difference is so great, that a Babylonian cannot become a subject of the King of Israel, unless formed anew, we cannot esteem them any other, so long as there does not appear the special feature of the select nation; neither their language, their behavior, not yet an earnest inquiry after the desired land; for we are not to form our conceptions of them different from the descriptions given by the King's scribes.

Q. Is it not exceedingly hard that I must deny myself an object so agreeable?

A. The King of glory denies nothing that is good; therefore, if it were really good, it would not be denied me: he only denies us those things which he knows would be evil; and it is a real kindness to us to be denied them. But suppose I thought it a real good, is it hard that he should deny me one favor, who has given himself to me with all blessings in heaven and earth?

Q. What if I never find one so agreeable, who travels the happy road?

A. If I had the object now before me, it must entirely depend on the blessing of God whether I should have any enjoyment or not; and have I not more reason to expect a blessing in the right way than in the wrong? Besides, as no good thing is withheld, or any thing denied but because it is evil, whatever God is pleased to bestow in his own way must be most agreeable.

Q. May not the valuable qualifications attending this person be so blessed as to be a means to make me happy and useful in the way, though she walk not in it herself?

A. Have I any reason to expect to be made happy by any person who is an utter stranger to those things wherein my happiness consists? or can I expect to find usefulness in the way, from that which cannot be enjoyed or obtained without going out of the way? Besides, whatever qualifications she is endued with, or however valuable her accomplishments, she will never employ those excellencies to assist others in a way she herself hath no delight in.

Q. But seeing her disposition is so agreeable, and her mind so well furnished with natural virtues and acquired ornaments, is there any reason to doubt but that a person thus prepared will have a taste for learning and embracing the best things? and may I not, therefore, expect to be an instrument to engage her mind to walk the blessed way?

A. All the accomplishments that persons can possibly receive from Babylon, can never prepare, qualify, or dispose them for travelling to Canaan; nor will they incline any person to that country; therefore, those who are not powerfully called by the King's commandment, and inwardly attracted by a vital influence, can never be engaged by any other motive or persuasion whatsoever: for there is nothing in the nature of a Babylonian (without the operation of new principles) that is capable of attraction; but the more excellent her accomplishments are, the more strongly her mind will be attached to that climate from which she received them: and on the other hand, as I formerly was a Babylonian, though now blessed with new principles, the old heaven still remains in my nature, which, like so much tinder, is ready to kindle with every spark of Babylonish fire. The greater the excellency she is embellished with, the greater the influence it will have to draw me aside into her paths, and so put me in perpetual danger; for of this I am infallibly assured, that it will draw away one's heart.

When he had thus reasoned with himself. he made a full pause, and appeared in a strong agitation of mind; a paleness arose in his face; and I heard him sigh and say to himself, "Whither has my mind been roving?" and trembling, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and earnestly cried, "O God of all grace, deliver me from temptation!"—And from that time he never would regard any of the damsels of that city; but said he would wait till he should find a true companion; and till then he would walk alone.

So he went on his way, rejoicing that he had escaped the snare, and carrying along with him this motto, "The Lord is my por-

tion;" enjoying great satisfaction in his own mind; saying to himself, "If my King sees it good for me to walk alone, I know he will bless that state unto me; but if it be for my good to enjoy a companion, I know his goodness will provide one for me, without my going out of the way to find one."

As he was thus going on his way, he observed a young virgin who was walking the same road; and he began to desire to be favored with her company, but thought it advisable to be very deliberate, because many seem to walk the same road, who only go part of the way, and then turn off into some other path; therefore, he diligently observed whether she closely attended to the right way. He perceived her take something out of her bosom, and diligently peruse it for a while; and then put it into her bosom again, and pursue the straight path; whereupon he went up to her, and inquired whither she was bound? She told him she was setting her face towards Zion. He asked her what it was she had been perusing, and she showed him that it was the map of the road, which she took along with her for her guide. He then began to inquire further, who she was, and whence she came. She told him she was by birth a Chaldean; by education and conversation a Babylonian; but the king of Israel had sent for her to go forth to seek a better country. He also asked what expectations or encouragements she had in taking such a journey. She told him she had the King's word to make her an inhabitant of his royal palace, and to grant her sufficient defence and sustenance all the way thither. He asked if she could be fully satisfied of the King's veracity?—She told him that the frauds and jealousies of Babylon had made such an impression on her mind, that she had found it very difficult to believe him that could not lie: but his majesty had condescended to give her the strongest demonstration of his fidelity; so that now she was convinced she had no reason to doubt his goodness; for he had confirmed his promise with an oath, and had given her to see, that in his own records, it was sealed with blood, the counterpart he had written upon her breast, and sealed it in characters of life; and hitherto she had found his word verified to her, in strongly defending, and abundantly supplying her, so that she could set to her seal that it was true.—Then she asked him divers questions relating to his travels and enjoyments: and he answered her in a free and satisfactory manner, so that their affections began to grow strong towards one another.

They appeared so agreeable one to another, that he began to think that they might be pleasant and profitable companions all the way; but first he retired to deliberate on the conversation that had passed already, when, the more he thought of her diligence in the pursuit of her journey, and her fixed satisfaction concerning the end of it, her understanding in those things laid down in her guide, her experience in the way, and the delight she appeared to take in meditating on, and conversing about, the joys of the city of habitation, &c., the more he was satisfied that she was a Prince's daughter, travelling to the royal palace; and when he had lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and earnestly besought the Most High God for direction, and a blessing upon farther conversation, he came again into her company; and after some further discourse, he asked the reason of her walking on her journey alone. She told him she found but few travelling the same road, and she did not think it expedient to turn aside, or neglect her way, for any company in the world. If she met with company, such as delighted in the ways of Wisdom, she took pleasure therein; for by such company her heart was refreshed, and she thought herself strengthened in her journey thereby; but, otherwise, she chose rather to be alone, at leisure to employ herself in examining her map, viewing the springs by the way, with the fruit-trees and sweet flowers, hearing the singing of birds, and meditating on the glories of her Prince, and the joys she should have in his presence, &c.; so that as company was pleasant when she could enjoy it, the delights in the way supplied the want of company when alone; and, thus she neither was anxious to have company, nor had any aversion to it; her desire being to enjoy only what might forward her in the right way.

Then he proposed, that since they found each other's conversation comfortable and useful, it was his opinion it might be for their mutual advantage to join together and engage to keep company all the way. She told him it was not for persons in their profession to do any thing rashly; she would deliberate on it: so she retired, and prostrated herself before the King her Father, telling him the matter, imploring wisdom to direct; declaring herself willing to enjoy or be denied any thing, so it were according to his will, and might be for his honor. He told her she had already been informed, and well knew what manner of persons they must be, with whom it would be expedient or King's daughters to keep company; there-

fore, if she found the person to be one of the blood-royal, and endued with princely qualities, she was at full liberty; and moreover, by him it should be esteemed honorable.—When these two lovers met again, and had deliberately consulted on all such things as they conceived necessary relating to such an engagement, having duly considered the King's statutes thereupon, and jointly petitioned his presence with them, and his blessing on their undertaking, they were married.

I then observed these two happy companions pursuing their journey. They were sincere friends, pleasant companions, faithful partners, and useful assistants to each other. In dangers they would counsel and stand by one another;—in sorrows they would sympathize and comfort one another. If beset with enemies, one would watch while the other slept;—if one were sick, the other would comfort with cordials;—if one were indisposed in mind, the other would divert with some sweet song, or discourse concerning the pleasant land; if one were at a loss concerning any part of the way, the other would assist in searching and explaining the directions;—if one were ready to turn aside, the other would caution and admonish of the danger; if one were employed in any service, the other would be ready to assist, and if one was blessed with any special favors, the other would congratulate and rejoice on the occasion, &c.

I continued observing this united pair, advancing in their way, for they greatly contributed to help each other forward; many difficulties they surmounted, and many rich blessings they enjoyed as they travelled in the way. At last they arrived at a pleasant hill, in view of the Land of Promise, full of delights, refreshing fruits, pure streams and desirable entertainments. Here they sat down and rested in a delightful harbour, blessing God, and congratulating one another, in consideration of their enjoyments.—Then they went and refreshed themselves among the fruits and fountains, and afterwards they ascended to a tower, where was a large perspective glass; from whence they looked back on Babylon, and saw it all in flames, and the country turned to burning pitch. They then gave praise and glory to God for their wonderful deliverance, as well as for all the deliverances they had in the way. Then they took a prospect of the land before them, and saw Jerusalem, the royal palace, the goodly mountain of Lebanon, the clusters of Eshcol, and all the rivers flowing with milk, and the hills dropping

down sweet wine. Then they looked below to the great streams of Jordan, and beheld the High Priest, in his shining robes, waiting to carry them over. They also heard the inhabitants on the other side triumphing, singing, and shouting for joy.—Then they also lifted up their voices in songs of praise to Him that is, and that was, and that is to come; which raised my mind to such an ecstasy, that I awoke, and behold it was a dream.

But the thing was certain; and the interpretation sure.

REFLECTIONS.

To all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, who being in a single state, but, for sufficient reasons, judge it expedient to enter into the married state, or to any individual of them, to whom counsel may be acceptable, whether male or female, for they are all one in Christ, I direct this admonition to beware of being entangled with such companions in the conjugal relation, as certainly will be only heavy clogs, pricking thorns, and troublesome briers, to retard and incommode their walking with God. If you are born of God, to enjoy his spiritual presence and the light of his countenance, is your superlative joy, your ultimate delight. If you are a believer in Jesus, to bear his image in righteousness and true holiness, is the earnest and incessant desire of your soul; if you are blessed with the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the glory of your heavenly Father is the tenderest point that can touch your heart, and the most powerful spring that moves the whole series of your life. If this is not the case, you are yet in your sins; for where God resides, there is holiness of truth, and wherever he makes his habitation, he takes up his rest forever. Therefore remember, that the marriage contract is the strongest obligation, the closest union, and for the longest period, that nature is capable of. And if you should choose a bosom companion who is a stranger to your God, will it not have a natural and unavoidable tendency to interrupt your communion with the Lord of life, to infect your mind with a carnal disposition, and be a perpetual hindrance to your lively and diligent pursuit of those things whereby God might be glorified? And if you are caught in a snare through your own imprudence, may it not cause you to go softly all your life, in the bitterness of your soul? "What concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

After Israel entered the promised land, the first thing mentioned as the occasion of their idolatry, and

which laid the foundation of their ruin, was their marriages with their idolatrous neighbors. The second chapter of the book of Judges gives a general account of their revolting from the Lord, and of his dealing with them in consequence of their sins, of which this was the first, "And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods," (chap. iii. 6.)

If they married their persons, serving their gods was certain to be the consequence. This the Lord foretold them; and for this very reason gave such strict prohibitions in his law, (Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16,) "Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods." (Deut. vii. 3, 4.) "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son; nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son; for they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods."—(Josh. xxiii. 12, 13,) "If ye do in any wise make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you, know for a certainty that they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes," &c. And that this was the inevitable consequence when they violated these sacred precepts, is evident in many instances. (1 Kings xi. 2, 3.) Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in unto them, neither shall they come in unto you, for surely they will turn your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto these in love, and his wives turned away his heart." It is said of Ahab, (1 Kings, xvi. 31.) "He took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ithbaal, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him," (Chap. xxi. 25.) "There was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself, to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." Yet Jehoshaphat, forgetting the law of his God, took a daughter of Ahab, for a wife to his son Jehoram, who, proving a very wicked prince, this is given as a reason of it, (2 Kings viii. 18,) "For the daughter of Ahab was his wife." And likewise his son Ahaziah, walking in the same wicked course, the reason given is this, (2 Chron. xxii. 3,) "For his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly." And the wickedness of the people, priests and Levites, is ascribed to the same cause, (Ezra iv. 2) "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons." And see with what contrition this iniquity was confessed by those that trembled at God's commandments, (Ezra ix. 10—15,) and with what zeal they opposed this flagrant violation of God's holy law, Neh. xiii. 23—28.

But some will say, the partition-wall is now broken down, and this prohibition is not so binding on Christians as it was on Israel. I confess, in the sight of God, there is no difference of nations, countries or families, whether Greek, Jew, Britain, or Hottentot; but the irreconcilable separation between them that are after the flesh, and them that are after the Spirit, (of which the separation between Jews and Gentiles was but a shadow,) is rooted in the two seeds of the bond-woman, and the free. Therefore, by so much as Christians now are blessed with superior light, the obligation to avoid every thing that may tend to corrupt the mind from the simplicity that is in Christ, is more strictly binding. But, under the gospel, the prohibition is not national, but personal, (2 Cor. vi. 14,) "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers." According to the apostle's direction, those that are already married to unbelievers, are in conscience bound to fulfil their marriage covenant; but to the unmarried, he lays down this salutary precept, (1 Cor. vii. 39,) "Only in the Lord"

And now, my friend, if you have a humble regard to the word of God, I am certain I need say no more; and, if you have not, all my attempts will be fruitless. If these few hints may be blessed as a seasonable admonition, to excite you to set the Lord before your face, so as to choose a suitable help-meet, my end is answered: and may the blessing of God attend you! Farewell.

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